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An Exploration Of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions

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AN EXPLORATION OF INDIGENOUS SPIRITUAL MICROAGGRESSIONS

by

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This dissertation, submitted by Cerynn Dawn Desjarlais in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctorate of Philosophy in Counseling Psychology from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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Date

PERMISSION

Title   An Exploration of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions

Department   Counseling Psychology

Degree   Doctor of Philosophy

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Cerynn Dawn Desjarlais
June 22, 2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Glorify the Great Spirit of Love

ABSTRACT

This descriptive exploratory research is amongst the first to investigate Spiritual Microaggressions experienced by Indigenous Peoples across North America. Microaggressions can further be conceptualized and categorized as microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. Participants who self-identify as Indigenous individuals ages 18 and over, from North America, who work in or are educated in the mental health field engaged in 60-90-minute interviews to explore the spiritual microaggressions incurred upon them. A total of 8 participants who identify as mental health professionals and graduate students in the mental health field were interviewed as an intensity sample. Participants discussed the implications of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions (ISM) including how they have been impacted emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, and interpersonally by these incidents. Participants also shared the impact that these incidents have had on their livelihood, how they have coped with them, and what they hope can be done to mitigate ISM in the future. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, de-identified, and analyzed for thematic content using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Experiential data were contextually coded, emergent themes were created, and sorted into relevant superordinate categories and sub-themes. A cross-analysis was then conducted to consolidate requisite thematic constructs across participants. Superordinate interview themes that were found include: ISM Microaggression Taxonomy Endorsement and Accouterments (Microinvalidation, Microinsult, Microassault, Lateral Microaggressions), ISM Perpetrator Characteristics and Responses, ISM Responses, ISM Coping, ISM Mitigation,

Impact of ISM on Indigenous Peoples, and Research Interview Reactions. An auditing process took place for quality control, and superordinate themes and subthemes were depicted via the use of deidentified participant quotes. This mechanism for displaying thematic content holds deference to traditional Indigenous oral story telling culture, which emphasizes subjective and experiential knowledge gained through allegorical means. Implications for theoretical paradigm shifts, clinical practice, and social justice will be discussed, including suggestions for multiculturally appropriate coping skills, policy enactments and changes to mitigate microaggression frequency/severity, and a rationale for the novel conceptual category of lateral microaggressions.

Keywords: *Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions (ISM), Lateral Microaggressions, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Traditional Spirituality, Coping, ISM Mitigation*

FOREWORD NOTE

Individuals who identify as Native American, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, First Nations, Inuit, or Metis may be subsumed under the heading of Indigenous for the purposes of this paper indicating that they encompass various diverse groups of Indigenous Peoples aboriginal to the North American Continent. The word Indigenous may allow for increased parsimony while conveying the data and findings of this study and is not meant to associate or devalue the individual statuses and unique differences within these multifarious groups, or the participants who agree to take part in the research interviews.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter represents the foundational introduction to the seminal exploration of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions—a phenomenon which is yet to be exclusively studied in contemporary literature. This chapter provides the readers with a basic overview of literature on the topic to provide a substrate of knowledge and understanding required to comprehend the subsequent chapters depicted within this dissertation. Moreover, this chapter briefly elucidates the purpose of the study, including a firm rationale for descriptive qualitative inquiry into this significant social-justice related topic.

Brief Overview of Literature

Colonial History

"The White man will never be alone. Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead, did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds." These words, spoken by Chief Seattle [First People: Words of Wisdom: Chief Seattle [Suqwamish and Duawamish), 2019], wholeheartedly represent the wisdom endowed within Indigenous Spirituality. This sentiment conveys the essential traditional knowing that all things in this universe are inherently interconnected. All beings, both in life and in death, are intertwined within an infinite circular cosmology. Every action, word, thought, and emotion on this earth creates ripple effects extending into future generations, long after the death and demise of the

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physical body. For Indigenous Peoples of North America, spirituality and traditional wisdom have historically been central to livelihood and the core of well-being, which is embedded and intertwined within culture and life itself. The Early Europeans who sought to conquer the material world did not share these values, and instead sought wealth, resources, and personal gratification. This greed resulted in devaluing the lives and livelihood of Indigenous People, ultimately contributing to the untimely death and demise of multitudes of human beings who Europeans subjected to horrific colonial practices (Frosh, 2013). Though waves of genocide, forced land removal, and overt subjugation appear to have calmed on the surface, the ripple effects from this soul wound are still being experienced to this day.

An Introduction to Microaggressions

Although many people authentically believe that circumstances have progressed to the extent that racism no longer exists within society, evidence suggests that racism has not disappeared, and that it has merely altered in form (Sue et al., 2007; Feagin & Elias, 2013). For instance, misguided assumptions about minority group members still permeate the socially dominant discourse through the use of microaggressions; thus, covertly endorsing anti-minority sentiments while overtly giving the impression of supporting egalitarian values (DeVos & Banaji, 2005; Sue et al., 2007). Sue et al. (2007) effectively describe microaggressions as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). According to Sue et al. (2007), racial microaggressions "communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults" (p. 278), which may be intentional or unintentional in nature and enacted verbally or behaviorally. Microaggressions are further illustrated as being comprised of "subtle snubs or dismissive looks, gestures, and tones" which are innately pervasive within routine conversation to the extent that

they frequently go unnoticed or unacknowledged by perpetrators and bystanders who view them as being relatively innocent in nature (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273).

Given that microaggressions may be intentional or unintentional in nature, they can be further categorized and distinguished by type and intended/unintended impact (Sue et al., 2007). Previous research (Clark et al., 2014; Clark et al., 2011) suggests that Indigenous microaggressions primarily fit within a conceptual taxonomy originally crafted by Sue et al. (2007) that is used to define, categorize, and describe these phenomena. This taxonomy includes the categorical constructs of microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007). *Microassaults* are defined as "explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). *Microinsults* are defined as behavioral or verbal remarks that "convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). *Microinvalidations* are defined as "communications that exclude, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274).

Sue (2010a) argues that microaggressions "invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of the target persons, demean them on a person or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to an inferior status and treatment" (p. 3). Regardless of the type of microaggression being enacted, microaggressions are noted as attempts to minimize the experiential reality of those who may be deemed as the "most oppressed, ignored, and silenced" in society (Sue, 2017, p. 171). Microaggressions can be enacted interpersonally, or environmentally, meaning that not only do people consciously or unconsciously convey

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microaggressions to or about one another, but these are also a product of the very macro-level environment in which one works and lives (Sue et al., 2007). As such, racial and ethnic microaggressions are pervasive in form, and may occur within a variety of contexts, and life domains; thus, representing an everyday lived occurrence for people of color who inescapably persist within a world built upon discrimination.

Racial microaggressions are amongst the most widely studied type of microaggression, and those who have investigated this phenomenon have helped to substantiate conceptual evidence to support the need for further exploration of microaggressions amongst a variety of multicultural identity statuses. As such, the concept of microaggressions has been expanded upon, applied to, and investigated within diverse contexts, settings, and populations to describe discrimination related to important identity statuses beyond race/ethnicity including gender identity and sexual orientation (Nadal, 2018), religion/spirituality (Nadal et al., 2010), ability status (Kattari, 2018), size and body-shape (Hunt & Rhodes, 2018), immigration status (Nienhusser, et al., 2016), and more.

Spiritual and Religious Microaggressions

The investigation of spiritual and religious microaggressions amongst diverse groups is less common than research pertaining to race, ethnicity and other more salient identity statuses, however, this topic appears to be gaining much-deserved time and attention as of late (Nadal et al., 2010). As such, literature is steadily accumulating which speaks to the microaggression experiences of people who adhere to a variety of world religions including, but not limited to, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism (Cheng et al., 2017; Haque et al., 2018; Kim, 2016; Nadal et al., 2010). Nadal et al. (2010) provided a preliminary summarization of spiritual and religious microaggressions within the literature and subsequently defined *religious*

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microaggressions as; "subtle behavioral and verbal exchanges (both conscious and unconscious) that send denigrating messages to individuals of various religious groups" (p. 299). Literature delineating the experiences of non-religiously identified people also exists to delineate the experiences of those who do not ascribe to spiritual or religious values, practices, or beliefs (Cheng et al., 2018; Nadal et al., 2010).

Despite research delineating the existence of religious and spiritual microaggressions amongst diverse populations, an extensive review of literature reflects that the subjective experiences of microaggressions endured by individuals who endorse Indigenous Spirituality is scant. The microaggression experiences of First Nations, Metis, Inuit, Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiians (Indigenous People of North America) have been described within the existing body of literature, however, these accounts primarily discuss racial microaggressions with limited exploration into alternate identity statuses (Clark et al., 2014; Clark et al., 2011; Senter & Ling; 2017; Sittner et al., 2018). Microaggression research which focuses on other salient aspects of Indigenous identity would likely elucidate information to better understand the lived experiences of discrimination faced by Indigenous Peoples in modern-times. Extant microaggression literature exploring the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples primarily focuses on the intersectionality between race, ethnicity and of broader conceptualizations of Indigenous culture, in which spirituality and religion are inherently embedded. Although these domains inherently overlap with one another due to their deep and profound interconnectedness, a case can and should be made to highlight the importance of specifically exploring modern-day Indigenous spiritual discrimination. This exploration is imperative given that spirituality is often of key importance within the lives and livelihood of Indigenous Peoples, but yet is commonly subject to unacceptable forms of overt and covert discrimination.

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Significance of Indigenous Spirituality

When taking a closer look at Indigenous culture and spirituality, it is apparent that Indigenous culture is infused with spirituality at its core; Duran et al. (2008) even suggest that culture is an aspect of the soul itself. Spiritual values, norms, and ways of being in the world are an imperative part of the lived experiences and worldview of many Indigenous Peoples. According to Kulis and Tsethilkai (2016) for many Indigenous Peoples, spirituality is inseparable from life itself. As such, spirituality is deemed a significant and central aspect of life for countless Indigenous Peoples (Greenfield et al., 2015; Graham, 2002). While not all people who identify as Indigenous endorse a form of Traditional Indigenous Spirituality, many do, and this part of their identity may be very salient to their daily lived experiences and conceptualization of their place within a broader universal cosmology.

In addition to being central to life itself, many Indigenous People throughout the world utilize spirituality daily and in times of need as a coping mechanism to overcome formidable obstacles. Spirituality, in general, has been noted to enhance well-being, and to help people overcome mental health concerns. For instance, spirituality has been found to be helpful in the process of recovery from substance use disorders (Greenfield et al., 2015; Pardini et al. 2000). In particular, Pardini et al. (2000) demonstrated that individuals in substance use recovery who endorse spirituality experience lowered anxiety, have higher resiliency in the face of stress, and feel a sense of increased support and optimism in life. Native College Students have also been found to utilize traditional spirituality as a resource or source of strength throughout the completion of academic work (Jackson et al., 2003). Kulis and Tsethikai (2016) also indicate that Indigenous Students in the Southwest USA reported enhanced academic performance, along with higher levels of enculturation when they endorsed some form of Indigenous Spirituality.

According to Graham (2002), spiritual connections are also viewed as an important point of intervention and prevention for Native American suicide. As such, spirituality can be a significant aspect of the lives of Indigenous Peoples that enhances well-being while mitigating and protecting against detrimental health and mental health risks.

Indigenous Spiritual Discrimination

Given that spirituality is considered such a salient part of Indigenous culture which enhances well-being and promotes resilience, it is particularly concerning that spiritual and religious discrimination continues to occur to this day. Modern Indigenous spiritual discrimination no doubt continues as a consequence and ripple effect of prejudiced historical behaviors, including spiritual genocide. For instance, Kulis and Tsethikai (2016) elucidate that the Bureau of Indian Affairs originally imprisoned traditional Indigenous spiritual/religious leaders, effectively forcing many tribes to practice their spiritual traditions in secret to avoid legal sanctions as Christianity was systematically endorsed. Furthermore, LaDuke (2005) delineates that despite the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing freedom of religion for American citizens, Native Americans continue to be denied access to sacred land sites where traditional ceremonies are meant to take place in connection with nature. As such, the denigration of Indigenous spiritual practices is widespread, and countless examples of this type of discrimination can be found in media representations, literature, and are described in the subjective experiences of generations of Indigenous Peoples.

LaDuke (2005) and Sue et al., (2005) affirm that modern discrimination has come to exist in subtle forms, many of which are best described as microaggressions. According to Nadal et al. (2010) religious/spiritual microaggressions can occur even within clinical and educational settings. As such, Indigenous Peoples seeking help may inadvertently experience one of their

most significant protective factors denigrated within settings assumed to be *safe* environments. The ongoing discrimination and spiritual denigration that Indigenous Peoples face may therefore represent a formidable barrier which is perpetually extant, and to some degree, inescapable due to the ignorance of others surrounding them. As such, due time and attention focusing specifically on the topic of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions may help to elucidate and validate the lived experiences of those who endure modern-day discrimination while shedding light on much needed efforts to decolonize discrimination in North America.

Purpose of the Study; An Epigrammatic Delineation

Nadal et al. (2010) suggest that "an individual's race, ethnicity, and religion are often closely tied together" (p. 288), as such it makes sense that ethnic and racial microaggressions aimed toward Indigenous Peoples would speak to some aspects of Indigenous Spirituality. Indigenous culture is inherently infused with spirituality, as such, Indigenous People often endorse traditional spirituality regardless of other religious beliefs due to their culturally embedded context. As such, preliminary Indigenous microaggression literature focuses on ethnicity and culture, which are inherently rooted with spiritual themes, whereas a focused explication of spiritual microaggressions has not yet been completed. Such an exploration may shed light on an immensely important aspect of Indigenous culture which is known to promote physical and mental wellbeing. Given that spirituality is a core component to the lives of many Indigenous Peoples, who are also impacted by microaggressions daily, there exists a need to provide a concentrated effort to explore Indigenous spiritual and religious microaggressions with a refined focus.

Nadal et al. (2010) also point to a lack of psychological literature specifically delineating religious discrimination, yet an abundance of work exists describing racial discrimination. As

such, a gap in the literature also exists which gives credence to the exploration of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggression experiences. Furthermore, ample anecdotal evidence of the existence of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions exists, yet these experiences and their psychological impact have not been formally documented in academic literature. The exploration of Indigenous spiritual microaggressions is also yet to be explored in depth within the existing body of literature, despite microaggression research expanding exponentially to investigate many diverse religious systems and beliefs. Spirituality remains an integral aspect of the lives of many Indigenous Peoples, thus we need to have a focused understanding of how specifically targeted spiritual microaggressions impact them or their well-being. As such, the focused investigation of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions merits in-depth exploration.

Purpose of Current Research Topic

The present research therefore delineates and describes the phenomenon of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions, henceforth referred to as ISM. This includes illuminating the experiences of Indigenous Peoples of North America who encounter these events, including how they responded to ISM, how it impacted them and their livelihood, and how they coped through these events. This research also elucidates participant's thoughts and ideas of how ISM and microaggression experiences can be mitigated, including barriers to mitigation. Furthermore, this research acts as a form of social justice advocacy by giving a space for the voices of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous mental health students and professionals to be heard in the hopes of raising social consciousness and awareness about the harms that can be done from ISM and what we can do as a field and a society to improve.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND STUDY RATIONALE

Chapter II is composed of three principal sections which are comprised of foundational literature required to understand the theoretical background, purpose, rationale, and related findings of this study. Part I details colonial histories which have shaped the experience of modern discrimination in the lives of Indigenous Peoples. Part II delineates a review of microaggression literature related to this study, including previous research on racial microaggressions, spiritual microaggressions, as well as microaggressions within the mental health field and training programs. Part III describes the purpose and rationale for the study, including relevant research questions. Collectively, these section portions should provide sufficient context for the creation of the study, and promote a coherent contextual understanding of relevant findings.

An Abrdiged Exploration and Review of
Indigenous Colonial History and Discrimination: Part I

Chapter II, Part I includes an abridged history of Indigenous genocide, oppression, and discrimination illustrated to provide sufficient, yet perpetually incomplete information pertaining to the historical context that influences the sociopolitical realities experienced by Indigenous Peoples to this day. The extent to which this history impacts mental and physical health within minority populations will also be discussed to provide an understanding of the severity of these

historical implications. This literature review should therefore provide readers with sufficient information and context to understand the importance of the proposed research study to follow.

Indigenous Peoples must be viewed within a broader sociopolitical and historical context to inherently grasp their modern experiential percipience. As such, for microaggressions to be recognized and comprehended, the cultural context of Indigenous Peoples, including historical oppression and colonialism, must be considered (Hill et al., 2010). Belcourt-Dittloff and Stewart (2000) likewise suggest that historical racism, including genocide, reneged treaties, and exploitation, may have a role in the biopsychosocial functioning of Indigenous Peoples whom face immense physical and mental health disparities in contrast to the general population.

The Contextual Foundation of Discrimination towards Indigenous Peoples

Historically, White colonial powers sought to possess the land, wealth, and resources of North America which was already inhabited by Indigenous Peoples; as such, the very existence of Indigenous Peoples was immediately and henceforth, conceptualized as a "*problem*" (Hill et al., 2010, p. 106). Colonizers the world over have effectively authorized and enacted immense physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual damage upon People of Color, including Indigenous People (Frosh, 2013). According to Adorno et al. (1950, as cited in Frosh, 2013, p. 148), Early Europeans initially conceived of minority group members as a threat, excluded them from the dominant culture, and subsequently hated them for their ascribed societal position. As such, colonial powers placed minority group members into the dramatized, denigrated, and artificially labelled role of *others* who are then marginalized and systematically excluded from the in-group for their projected "otherness" (Frosh, 2013, p. 146). While scholars agree that overt racism has been decreasing over many decades, it is imperative to recognize that unconscious and automatic discriminatory associations remain as remnants of colonial history within society,

and represent ubiquitous social cognition which is continually propagated (DeVos & Banaji, 2005; O'Keefe, et al., 2015).

Colonialism, War and Genocide

According to Zinn (1980), from first contact onward, White men have viewed Indigenous Peoples as inferior beings who should forcibly be made to be subservient to them. For instance, Christopher Columbus and company exploited Indigenous Peoples in the Caribbean by raping, capturing, burning, and killing them in the name of colonial exploitation and greed (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). Thereafter, subsequent incidents of first contact amongst Indigenous Peoples and Europeans quickly resulted in widespread xenophobia on the part of European settlers, who reacted by enacting vehement genocidal practices against Indigenous Peoples for generations (LaDuke, 2005; Hill et al., 2010). Genocide was enacted in a variety of forms, including the physical annihilation of Indigenous People via violent military endeavors, economic deprivation, and isolation within forced segregation areas henceforth called reservations (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Hill et al., 2010). Indigenous populations were near decimated by acts of war, and those who survived were subject to slavery, rape, and forced assimilation (LaDuke, 2005). Disease brought by White settlers also endangered the health of many Indigenous Peoples who had survived inhumane treatment (LaDuke, 2005). Nearly every human injustice imaginable took place to contribute to the slaughter and near annihilation of millions of human beings throughout North America with little remorse or recompense on the side of White Europeans who profited from the deaths of a great many (Graham, 2002). Despite killing millions of people, Fenelon and Trafzer (2014) explain that White settlers somehow conceptualized themselves as being *civilized* while labeling Indigenous Peoples as *savage;* thus, creating a racial separation and social stratification that was later institutionalized within North

America. Fenelon and Trafzer also report that Indigenous Peoples who were initially enslaved and killed were eventually replaced by enslaving and exploiting African Peoples; thus, enacting horrific periods of racial formation that impacted generations of human beings globally.

Cultural and Spiritual Genocide

> "If the Great Spirit had desired me to be a white man he would have made me so
> in the first place. He put in your heart certain wishes and plans, and in my heart
> he put other and different desires. It is not necessary for eagles to be crows." –
> Chief Sitting Bull. [(American Indian Words of Wisdom.), 2020]

Subsequent to brutal physical genocide, cultural genocide was enacted against Indigenous survivors who were relocated to isolated and desolate pockets of economically disadvantaged land known as reserves and settlements (Scott et al., 2017). Treaties originally enacted to provide some semblance of land ownership, community care, and well-being amongst Indigenous People were largely reneged; land repossession took place and continues to take place in modern society to this day (Belcourt-Dittloff & Stewart, 2000; LaDuke, 2005). As such, Indigenous Peoples were largely separated from others in North American society, and correspondingly forced to occupy a low socioeconomic level within society. Said (1978, as cited in Hill et al., 2010, p. 112), suggests that Euro-Americans have thus maintained White superiority by creating a reviled representation of the *other,* who unlike them, does not hold power gained through imperialism.

Widespread assimilation practices were inevitably utilized to radically alter the culture, spiritual beliefs, and practices of surviving Indigenous Peoples in an effort to "kill the Indian and save the man" (Adams, 1995, as cited in Gone, 2013, p. 689). This xenophobic hatred of the other, spurred the mandatory apprehension of Indigenous children as targets of Christian indoctrination who were removed from their families and home-communities and forced to

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acculturate (Evans-Campbell, 2008). The horrific conditions within boarding/residential schools have been noted as being comparable to that of concentration camps where children were forcibly removed from their parents and communities (Graham, 2002). School officials are noted to have abused children sexually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually in addition to reinforcing emotional suppression (Gone, 2013). Moreover, at these institutions' children were punished for and prohibited from speaking their natal language, and engaging in spiritual practices and beliefs, thus substantially contributing to the loss of Indigenous language and culture (Gone, 2013; Glenn, 2015; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Adams, 1995, as cited in Evans-Campbell, 2008, p. 327). According to Evans-Campbell et al. (2012) Indigenous boarding school survivors have high rates of suicidal thoughts and substance use compared to those who did not attend boarding schools. The intergenerational transition of these problems is also salient; as the children of boarding school attendees have a higher lifetime prevalence of symptoms indicative of anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and suicidality (Evans-Campbell et al., 2012). Gone (2013) discusses how family disruption, religious suppression, and coercive assimilation all contribute to the enactment of historical trauma which is cumulative in nature and which continues to impact Indigenous Peoples to this day (Gone, 2013).

Ongoing Discrimination and Dehumanization

"How smooth must be the language of the white, when they can make right look wrong, and wrong look right." These words spoken by Black Hawk (Sauk) [Brown, 2020], describe the inherent power that words can carry, thus distorting the truth and confuscating social arrangements to promulgate victim blaming. This sort of rhetoric paints a picture rife with denial of injustice, and with a rejection of responsibility at its core, suggesting White People have done, and can do, no harm. Not only does this rhetoric dissolutely absolve White People from the

wrongs that have been committed, but it also obsequiously places them in a position of feigned moral superiority. As such, Indigenous Peoples continue to be invalidated by the subtle and overt denigration of their cultural worldview, customs, values, language, spirituality, and overall lifestyle (Hill et al., 2010; Sue, 2010b). Indigenous Peoples are brutally stereotyped and viewed as primitive, subhuman, passive, non-competitive, nonverbal, uneducable, uncivilized, animalistic, superstitious, blood-thirsty, savages, alcoholics, and drunkards (Sue, 2010b; Senter & Ling, 2017; Sue, 2003; Hill et al., 2010). As such, people learn that these groups should evoke emotional reactions of fear, disgust, revulsion, and contamination (Sue, 2010b). As such, the original xenophobic misperceptions continue to be threaded amongst contemporary North American society.

According to Senter and Ling (2017), microaggressions towards Indigenous Peoples represent the remnants of conventional hostile and derogatory attitudes that have always been present. As such, it appears that traditional racism has not disappeared, but instead has merely changed form with modernization, and has become more subtle and multifaceted in nature (Senter & Ling, 2017). The intricacies of modern-day racism therefore collude sub-textually to reinforce a racial hierarchy where White People remain in power, and Indigenous Peoples remain at an eternal lower and reprehensible social status (Senter & Ling, 2017). When Indigenous People challenge the status quo, microaggressions can be utilized by those in power as a veiled means to subjugate these contests, thus maintaining racial supremacy and governance (Senter & Ling, 2017). Duran et al. (2008) indicate that when people are oppressed, they are wounded; as such, the continual use of microaggressions perpetuates oppression, thereby mitigating imperative healing processes necessary to rectify the soul wound that has been incurred upon Indigenous Peoples. Graham (2002, p. 58) likewise suggests that the historical trauma enacted

against Indigenous Peoples is a history that is "…painful to recall and more painful when it seems to be forgotten, trivialized, or denied." White People have effectively created a horrific historic timeline for Indigenous Peoples, and then actively suppressed its importance on their current state of well-being by continually engaging in microinvalidations that perpetually minimize their cultural reality.

Despite pervasive war and genocide that have been enacted against Indigenous Peoples, many survived and later thrived (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). Indigenous Peoples now represent approximately 2% of the population within the USA (USA Census Bureau, 2017) and 4.9% of the population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2018). A major misconception and stereotype present amongst the general population is that Indigenous Peoples are largely extinct, and that any who survived represent historical relics who lack modern-day relevance (Hill et al., 2010). This extinction and extermination rhetoric feeds into false notions that Indigenous People of North America either no longer exist or no longer matter in society (Fenelon, 2016; Senter & Ling, 2017). Moreover, this genocidal discourse effectively excludes Indigenous People from social analyses within scientific and academic endeavors (Fenelon, 2016; Senter & Ling, 2017).

A Comprehensive Exploration and Review of Microaggression Literature: Part II

Chapter II, Part II consists of a literature review detailing an introduction to the phenomenon of microaggressions, with subsequent subsections detailing previous research delineating microaggressions as manifesting within the domains of race, religion/spirituality, physical and mental health, mental health counseling, and academic training programs and workplace institutions. This section will also briefly explore how spirituality/religion may be utilized by some to manage and cope with microaggressive experiences. Indigenous Research is

directly discussed when possible, however, it is imperative for readers to consider that Indigenous populations represent those who are commonly known to be understudied within academic literature. As such, when relevant research could not be located pertaining to Indigenous populations, research on the topic is still presented in the hopes that it can be theoretically and conceptually extrapolated to provide sufficient background where necessitated.

An Introduction to Microaggressions

Harvard psychiatrist, Chester Pierce, was perceptive of the ongoing remnants of racism embedded within common social dynamics which remain extant within society, and took note of these (Sue et al., 2007). More specifically, Pierce observed African Americans being dismissed and degraded by Non-Black Americans despite the widespread societal endorsement and promotion of egalitarian values (Sue et al., 2007). Pierce subsequently described the impact of this covert phenomenon, and in 1970, created the term *racial microaggressions* to describe these minority experiences of relegation and denigration (Sue et al., 2007). Since then, many scholars, most notably Derald Wing Sue, have elaborated and expanded considerably upon this phenomenon and investigated microaggressions within a large variety of domains associated with various minority identity statuses (Hunt & Rhodes, 2018; Kattari, 2018; Nadal et al., 2010; Nadal, 2018; Nienhusser et al., 2016; Sue et al., 2007).

Since the initial inception and conceptualization of a microaggression, this term has gained noticeable attention in research and media; being exposed as a significantly pervasive and ultimately damaging phenomenon due to the insidious and cumulative nature of these emotionally harmful events (Sue, 2010a; Sue, 2010b). Sue et al. (2007) defined the term *microaggressions* as the everyday verbal and non-verbal, environmental slights, snubs, or insults that convey derogatory, hostile, or negative messages towards target persons based solely upon

membership within a marginalized group. Sue and colleagues (Sue et al., 2007; Nadal et al., 2014a; Nadal et al., 2014b) amongst others, have since contributed immensely to microaggression literature in an effort to fully understand these experiences by expanding, elaborating, and researching the concept and phenomenon within the field of psychology and sociology.

Microaggression Taxonomy

Given that microaggressions may be intentional or unintentional in nature, they can therefore be further categorized and distinguished by type, and intended/unintended impact (Sue et al., 2007). Microaggressions have been demonstrated in the literature to primarily fit within a conceptual taxonomy originally crafted by Sue et al. (2007) to define, categorize, and describe these phenomena. This taxonomy includes the categorical constructs of microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations which will be described again here (Sue et al., 2007).

Microassaults are defined as "explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Sue et al. (2007) explains that microassaults are more akin to "old fashioned" racism but are considered micro in nature as they may be conducted by perpetrators in seemingly safe or private environments. For instance, an individual may engage in a microassault in an area where minority group members appear to be absent, or alternatively, they may occur when a majority group member was effectively unable to control themselves (Sue et al., 2007). Microassaults are noted to be primarily conscious in nature with negative intentionality (Sue et al., 2007). These instances are also described as representing environmental microaggressions occurring at the macro-levels within society, thereby also being instituted at a systematic level (Sue et al., 2007).

Microinsults are defined as behavioral or verbal remarks that "convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Sue et al. (2007) suggest that context is important to ascertain the underlying or hidden meaning and insult which is contained within these messages. For instance, microinsults can be expressed behaviorally, such as when colleagues fail to make eye contact with a peer who identifies as a minority group member (Sue et al., 2007). Microinsults are thus conceptualized as being primarily unconscious in nature and may be embodied via themes of ascription of intelligence, assumed criminal status, pathologized cultural values and communication styles, or perceived status as a second-class citizen (Sue et al., 2007). Overall, the target of the microinsult may be verbally or behaviorally treated as though they are somehow lesser than others and assumed to be inferior or deficient in comparison to majority group members (Sue et al., 2007).

Microinvalidations are defined as "communications that exclude, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Microinvalidations are described as typically being unconscious in nature and may represent themes including; color-blindness, a denial of individual racism, being an alien in one's own land, and endorsing the myth of meritocracy (Sue et al., 2007). As such, microinvalidations promote ideas that racial discrimination does not exist or warrants less attention than it is currently receiving, suggesting that its role is relatively minor within the overall scheme of society (Sue et al., 2007). Furthermore, microinvalidations appear to invalidate the history and lived experiences of minority group members and may suggest that their historical and lived experiences within their nation of citizenship is not representative of that of true Americans or Canadians, thus reinforcing the idea that they are perpetual foreigners within their own land unlike White People (Sue et al., 2007; Devos & Banaji, 2005; Nadal et al., 2010).

Brief Introduction to the Present Study

The current research topic will expose the impact of microaggressions on Indigenous Peoples who have multiple intersecting identities, which is particularly important to investigate given that spiritual/religious identity can, for some, be separate from ethnic/racial identity. Spiritual and religious microaggressions are often subsumed into larger studies on racial microaggressions; however, the present research will ensure that Indigenous Spiritual Microaggression (ISM) experiences receive explicit inquiry. This is particularly important given the significance of this identity in the lives of many Indigenous People who endorse traditional spirituality. As such, the remainder of this literature review will delineate the impact of microaggressions upon Indigenous Peoples, People of Color, and Religious/Spiritual group members, and show cause for the necessity of this research while providing readers with a foundational understanding of the proposed research topic.

Indigenous Racial Microaggressions

Similar to many People of Color, Indigenous People experience daily microaggressions which accumulate in a systematically and individually denigrating way; thus, representing discrimination that is both subtle and pervasive in frequency (Sue et al., 2007; Hill et al., 2010). Although research investigating microaggressions is rapidly accumulating in the existing body of scientific literature, few research investigations are tailored specifically to the exploration of the microaggression experiences of Indigenous Peoples (Hill et al., 2010). The remainder of this subsection will therefore delineate Indigenous microaggression research already existing in the current body of scientific literature.

Clark et al. (2011) implemented the use of CQR to investigate how Indigenous Peoples were treated during the dissolution of an Indigenous university mascot. Clark, et al. (2011) found

several important findings from this study; one being that many instances of Indigenous

microaggressions do fall within the taxonomy of racial microaggressions originally created by

Sue et al. (2007). More specifically, Clark et al. (2011) indicated that racial microaggressions

depicted in their data fit proficiently into the three major categories of microaggressions

delineated by Sue et al. (2007) including microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations.

Clark et al. (2011) also identified seven themes of microaggressions aimed at Indigenous Peoples

including: *Alleging Oversensitivity*, *Waging Stereotype Attacks*, *Denying Racism*, *Advocating*

Sociopolitical Dominance, *Employing the Logics of Elimination and Replacement*, *Expressing*

Adoration, and *Conveying Grief*. These themes suggest that Indigenous Peoples are exposed to a

number of microaggressive themes that clearly transmit a diverse array of discriminatory

sentiments towards them.

The theme of *Waging Stereotype Attack* fell within the category of microassaults which

represents overt forms of microaggressions where Indigenous Peoples are exposed to attempts to

humiliate, demean, and impair minority group members (Clark et al., 2011). Themes such as

Advocating Sociopolitical Dominance, and *Alleging Oversensitivity* were categorized as

microinsults, wherein the needs, desires, and values of the majority culture were conceived of as

superior to Indigenous ideals (Clark et al., 2011). Microinvalidations also took place, where

Indigenous Peoples were viewed as being too easily offended, overly sensitive, and were

encouraged to ignore reactions to oppression and assimilate to the dominant culture (Clark et al.,

2011). Several themes were classified as microinvalidations, including *Denying Racism,*

Employing Logistics of Elimination and Replacement, Expressing Adoration, and *Conveying*

Grief (Clark et al., 2011). These microinvalidations also embody attempts to dismiss and

minimize systemic forms of racism, and portray Indigenous Peoples as extinct and vanishing (Clark et al., 2011).

Microaggression themes described by Clark et al. (2011) complement themes found by Clark et al. (2014) who implemented the use of focus groups to investigate experiences of racial microaggressions amongst Aboriginal undergraduate students at a Canadian university. Using Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) methodology, Clark et al. (2014) denoted five distinct themes which illustrate the microaggression experiences of Indigenous students; *Primitiveness, Enduring Unconstrained Voyeurism, Withstanding Jealous Accusations, Experiencing Curricular Elimination or Misrepresentation, and Living with Day to Day Cultural and Social Isolation.*

The theme of *Primitiveness* is communicated via microaggressions on a regular basis (Clark et al., 2014). This theme reveals that little is known about the Indigenous Peoples in the dominant culture, and society does little to validate or acknowledge their existence (Clark et al., 2014). Clark et al. (2014) described an instance where a shocked participant was asked if Indigenous People still live in teepees. Microinsults such as this convey sentiments that Indigenous People are irrelevant as modern consumers, technologically unadvanced, and not engaged with modern society (Clark et al., 2014). Themes such as this can also subject Indigenous People to spontaneous cultural appropriation, and mocking (Clark et al., 2014).

The theme of *Enduring Unconstrained Voyeurism* represents a common microaggression experience incurred upon Indigenous individuals wherein people find it necessary to label and categorize their ethnic and racial identity in a disrespectful and obnoxious manner based on arbitrary assumptions about phenotype (Clark et al., 2014). This theme arose when people attempted to incorrectly guess at Indigenous Peoples nationality and continued guessing until

they finally arrived at the correct answer (Clark et al., 2014). This demonstrates that Indigenous heritage is only acknowledged and thought of as a last resort after a variety of other ethnicities have been exhausted as options (Clark et al., 2014). Overall, this theme represents a microinsult which may be enacted as Indigenous Peoples have their identity poked, prodded, and pried at (Clark et al., 2014).

Next, the theme of *Withstanding Jealous Accusations*, describes how the peers of Indigenous students had a tendency of minimizing their academic achievements. Also, encompassed by this theme are the largely misunderstood notions of Indigenous People obtaining coveted public benefits (Clark et al., 2014). For instance, people assume that Indigenous students did not earn a place at their educational institution and were merely awarded a position due to their racial/ethnic identity without merit (Clark et al., 2014). Clark et al. (2014) indicated that microaggressions with this theme conveyed the notion that Indigenous Peoples received unfair advantages, unearned benefits, and privilege. These microaggressions are largely enacted due to misinformation based on stereotypes (Clark et al., 2014). This theme effectively perpetuates distorted information, while invalidating the experiences of Indigenous Peoples who have worked diligently for these benefits (Clark et al., 2014).

Experiencing Curricular Elimination or Misrepresentation is another theme depicted by Clark et al. (2014) wherein Indigenous issues were overlooked, seriously distorted, or addressed superficially within academic curriculum across disciplines. This theme represents a type of microinvalidation where the experiences of Indigenous Peoples are negated, minimized, or viewed as unimportant (Clark et al., 2014). Students also appear to have been viewed as cultural experts who are deferred to both outside and inside of the classroom at their own expense to meet the learning needs of others who do not identify as Indigenous (Clark et al., 2014).

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Living with Day to Day Cultural and Social Isolation was also a theme delineated by

Clark et al. (2014), wherein systematic isolation on campus took place. Indigenous students

realized that sharing their ethnicity with others may further estrange them, particularly when

there was an absence of other Indigenous students in their courses (Clark et al., 2014).

Overall, these microaggression themes exhibit that microaggressions exist in day to day

interactions and effectively denigrate the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples in a variety of

ways; all being disrespectful and discounting in nature. As such, both Clark et al. (2011) and

Clark et al. (2014) demonstrated that diverse types of racial microaggressions aimed at

Indigenous Persons embody discriminatory conjectures, and insidious invalidations of their lived

experiences and worldviews.

Jones and Galliher (2015) likewise note that young Indigenous Adults are subjected to

racial microaggressions which are directly related to their ethnic/cultural identification. In

particular, Jones and Galliher collected data from 114 Indigenous young adults to investigate

both their racial microaggression experiences and their self-reported cultural and ethnic

identification. These authors utilized a regression analysis to examine this data, and from this,

ascertained that microaggressions are associated with a number of identity correlates which

aggress against ethnic identification (Jones & Galliher, 2015). These correlates include

assumptions surrounding gender, assumed criminality, superiority of White values, universality

of Native Experiences, the myth of meritocracy, ascription of intelligence, and assumed inferior

status (Jones & Galliher, 2015). According to Jones and Galliher, 98% of their sample disclosed

at the least one type of racial microaggression experience. Results suggested that

microinvalidations were significantly more upsetting than microinsults for females in

comparison to males (Jones & Galliher, 2015). Sue (2010a) explains that microinvalidations

dismiss and exclude the experiential reality of racial minority group members. As such, it appears that Indigenous Women are particularly susceptible to experiencing microinvalidations, likely due to the intersectionality between race/ethnicity and gender which minimizes and devalues the lived experiences of Women of Color in society. From a Multicultural-Feminist perspective, this phenomenon may elude to ongoing social injustice wherein women with multiple intersecting identities are historically and systematically oppressed, devalued, and objectified. Men were reported to be more upset while encountering microinsults which insensitively act to demean identity through more overt rudeness (Jones & Galliher, 2015; Sue, 2010a). As such, it appears that racial microaggressions differentially impact Indigenous Peoples based on intersectionality of identity statuses, and sub-type of microaggression experience.

Jones and Galliher (2015) also discovered microaggression themes of *assumed criminality and superiority of White values* in their step-wise regression analysis. These themes are congruent with discriminatory ideals which perpetuate beliefs that Indigenous Peoples are inferior to the majority culture, and promote feelings of devaluation (Jones & Galliher, 2015). These themes and results confirm that microaggressions occur frequently and are emotionally upsetting to the person who has endured them. Jones and Galliher also explained that Indigenous youth in particular, are faced with pressures to assimilate to mainstream White American values. As such, when Indigenous Peoples behave in a manner which is more congruent with traditional cultural values, it places them at risk for encountering microaggressions (Jones & Galliher, 2015). Jones and Galliher further elucidated that Indigenous Peoples who closely identify with traditional attitudes may be more aware of and sensitive to microaggressions which they encounter. Therefore, those individuals who embrace traditional Indigenous values and beliefs may be at an even greater risk of harm than others who do not as strongly identify with

traditional culture and identity. Nevertheless, Indigenous Identity can be a protective factor from

discrimination to guard against mental health concerns such as depression (Whitbeck et al.,

2002; Hill et al., 2010). As such, a complex relationship exists wherein cultural identity is

inherently a protective factor for Indigenous Peoples, yet they are nevertheless demeaned and

denigrated by a predominantly White society for having this identity.

Nadal et al. (2014a) used a large sample size (N = 506) to explore the relationship

between racial microaggressions and mental health, and found that microaggression experiences

differ by racial group and may include themes of being exoticized, invalidated, treated like a

second-class citizen, or assumed to be similar to others from their respective minority group.

These findings are somewhat akin to results by Clark et al. (2014) and Clark et al. (2011)

wherein similar themes surfaced which likewise denigrated minority identities, and subjected

these groups to invalidation and feelings of otherness within society. As such, it appears that

some of the themes from Clark et al. (2011) and Clark et al. (2014) which apply to Indigenous

Peoples, also appear prevalent when studying microaggressions amongst other People of Color.

Racial Microaggression Summary

Microaggressions clearly convey antiminority sentiments and are largely steeped in

erroneous information and misguided assumptions. Misinformation is particularly detrimental to

minority group members including Indigenous Peoples as it perpetuates negative stereotypes that

primarily go unchallenged by the vast majority (Clark et al., 2014). Clark et al. (2011) likewise

suggested that inaccurate misinformation about minority members and groups is harmful and

should be countered in both cultural studies and general education. Members of the dominant

society enact microaggressions against Indigenous Peoples based solely on their group

identification, as they are unequivocally viewed as outsiders to the majority culture, and are

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therefore, largely misunderstood. As such, a sense of *othering* is continually perpetuated through these subtle forms of racism which recurrently transpire on a daily basis due to misinformation, assumptions, and misguided conceptualizations. As such, it appears pertinent that misinformation and associated behaviors, such as microaggressions, should be identified and made salient within the dominant culture. Public awareness may facilitate prevention efforts to be enacted where needed to mitigate further harm caused from these interactions.

Impact of Microaggressions on Physical and Mental Health

As previously indicated in section I of this chapter, Indigenous peoples face significant health and mental health disparities, largely in part due to historical trauma and ongoing oppression and discrimination within society. The cumulative effects of microaggressions are likewise known to be detrimental to the physical and psychological well-being of minority populations (Sue, 2010a; Sue, 2010b). Given that microaggressions may exacerbate harm incurred upon Indigenous Peoples who already face disproportionately high health and mental health concerns, these subtle forms of racism certainly warrant more focused attention. Furthermore, understanding the implications of microaggressions on the physical and psychological health of Indigenous populations may be a useful endeavor which could conceivably aid in the formulation of prevention plans which could be implemented to mitigate associated harm. As such, the remainder of this section portion will focus on the impact of microaggressions upon the health and mental health of Indigenous Peoples and other People of Color.

Johnson-Jennings et al. (2014) explored the relationship between racial discrimination, non-ceremonial tobacco smoking, and health in urban Two-Spirited/LGBTQ American Indian and Alaska Natives (AIAN). Johnson-Jennings et al. explain that Two-Spirited AIAN's, in

particular, experience significantly increased racial discrimination compared to others. Increased racial discrimination is subsequently related to increases in subjective pain, and intensifications of health risk behaviors, such as non-ceremonial tobacco smoking (Johnson-Jennings et al., 2014). As such, Johnson-Jennings suggested that the incurrence of microaggressions increases pain and stress, which then in turn increases health risk-behaviors. This is congruent with findings by Nadal et al. (2014a) who found that racial microaggressions are significantly correlated with a lack of behavioral control. This perceived lack of behavioral control may well exacerbate health-risk behaviors, such as non-ceremonial tobacco smoking. Johnson-Jennings et al. also indicated that in order for clinicians to understand the impact of racial discrimination on health-related and overall health, an Indigenist stress coping model may need to be combined with a merging of biological, social, and cultural experiences. Johnson-Jennings et al. suggested that treatment and prevention planning requires culture-specific recommendations, and interventions should be shaped to account for multicultural intersecting identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and so forth.

Huynh (2012) likewise explored racial microaggressions within a sample of 360 Asian American and Latino adolescents and found that microaggressions were related to increased stress, anger, and anxiety, which have the potential to increase illness and symptoms of depression. Nadal et al. (2014a) also explored the impact of racial microaggressions on mental health amongst a number of racial groups and found that the incurrence of microaggressions is significantly correlated with anxiety, depressive symptoms, negative affect, and a lack of behavioral control. Blume et al. (2012) similarly investigated how microaggressions effect the physical and mental health of college students of Color attending a Primarily White Institution (PWI). Blume et al. found that microaggressions incurred upon college students of Color lead to

increased feelings of anxiety and resultant under-age alcohol binging. As such, health risk

behaviors such as smoking and consuming alcohol are noted as resultant products of racial

microaggression experiences (Blume et al., 2012; Johnson-Jennings et al., 2014).

Microaggressions in Academic Higher Education and Workplace Settings

In addition to negatively impacting physical health, microaggressive experiences are also

commonly known to have a detrimental impact on the emotional wellbeing and the day to day

comfort of individuals. It is also exceedingly likely that once the emotional well-being of an

individual target is compromised, they may experience further deterioration of psychological

health and perceived well-being. Prospectively, diminished well-being may well also lead to

impairment in other important life domains, such as academic or work functioning. The

following research studies discussed will add an intensified focus on how mental and emotional

health is negatively impacted by microaggression experiences, particularly within

academic/workplace settings within higher education.

Despite many universities and colleges explicitly including diversity within institutional

mission and program statements, these organizations are not immune to the pervasiveness of

subtle discrimination. Microaggressions, in particular, appear to be omnipresent and inescapable

even within higher education institutions such as colleges and universities. Ultimately, this

suggests that students, staff, and future mental health professionals are most certainly exposed to

these instances of discrimination even within purportedly safe areas of post-secondary learning.

Blume et al. (2014) specifically suggested that faculty at PWI's (Primarily White Institutions)

should be aware of the adverse consequences microaggressions have on minority students,

including the extent to which these experiences threaten their persistence in academic pursuits.

As such, it is important to consider how the academic well-being of minority students may be

inadvertently hindered by ongoing experiences of subtle racism. This impact of microaggressions on academic persistence is particularly concerning given that college drop-out rates may be exacerbated by worsened academic performance (Blume et al., 2014). As such, microaggressions are threatening persistence in academics, and perpetuating already existing societal inequalities (Blume et al., 2014). Once microaggressions are identified, discussed, and acknowledged by larger audiences, perhaps awareness will enhance prevention so further harm is not incited. Blume et al. (2014) noted that historically White serving institutions should aim to procure a safe atmosphere where support and protection from racial microaggressions is provided.

Harwood et al. (2012) supported these conjectures through their exploration of the experiences of racial microaggressions amongst college students of Color living in residence halls at a PWI. Over 70 instances of microaggressions within residence halls, and 400 experiences of microaggressions overall were identified by Harwood et al. in focus groups. These focus groups consisted of a total of 81 graduate and undergraduate students of Color (Harwood et al., 2012). As such, results from Harwood et al. demonstrate that microaggressions are commonplace within institutions of higher learning, despite it being well-known that these institutions often actively attempt to promote a climate of acceptance, non-discrimination, and care.

Harwood et al. (2012) described 4 main themes of racial microaggressions which students of Color spoke to, including *racial jokes and verbal comments, racial slurs written in shared spaces, segregated spaces and unequal treatment, and a denial and minimization of racism.* Harwood et al. indicated that these microaggressions did not just come from fellow student peers, but also were noted to take place in the form of microinvalidations when students attempted to discuss peer microaggressions with staff. Harwood et al. explains that

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microinvalidations effectively act to dismiss racist experiences as unfounded, and can contribute to the denial of racism altogether. As such, students who attempted to seek help and bring attention to the microaggressive acts, such as racial slurs and other microassaults were prospectively worse off for attempting to enact change and address these concerns (Harwood et al., 2012). Harwood et al. (2012) further delineates how racial slurs act as messages to students of Color that they do not belong, causing awkward and emotionally upsetting experiences which effectively diminish feelings of support and welcoming; therein reducing students to their racial minority status. Overall, the thematic results of Harwood et al.'s study demonstrate that microaggressive experiences are deprecating in nature, and negatively impact the social and emotional experiences of People of Color. As such, results from Harwood et al. (2014) seem congruent with the results of Clark et al. (2014), Clark et al. (2011), and Nadal et al. (2014a).

While it is well known that many colleges purport to be racially inclusive, and honor diversity, it is clear that such missions and ideals cannot be upheld without first shifting and enhancing the multicultural awareness of staff and students who attend those institutions. Ultimately, when PWI's are experienced as unsupportive and unwelcoming, students of Color may experience adverse outcomes, including greater mental health problems, poor academic performance, and increased stress (Harwood et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2007; Worthington et al., 2008). As such, Harwood et al. (2012) recommends that institutions of higher education should aim to increase awareness and understanding of subtle forms of racism as a means of improving the experiences of racial minority students. Furthermore, Harwood et al. suggested that multicultural education which addresses microaggressions could potentially be infused into already existing curriculum. As such, awareness of these ongoing incidences of microaggressive acts would be enhanced over time, with the aim of preventing students from becoming the targets

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of subtle racism. As such, it appears that curriculum and programmatic structure, which is already in place, could very well be adjusted to include the topic of microaggressions to encourage the prevention of further instances of harm.

Nadal et al. (2014b) also investigated the impact of microaggressions within workplace/educational settings amongst college students, and explored how this effects self-esteem. Nadal et al. (2014b) concluded that microaggressions, particularly those which occur within the context of the workplace or educational setting, predict lower self-esteem. In particular, Nadal et al. (2014b) suggested that microaggressions vary in type as a result of alternate intersecting identities such as gender and sexual orientation. Individuals belonging to multiple groups are therefore subjected to varied microaggressive experiences of a greater amount based on these intersecting identity statuses, which may negatively impact their sense of self-worth (Nadal et al., 2014b).

A diminished sense of self-worth may be especially problematic when in combination with depressive symptoms which are also noted to be exacerbated by racial microaggressions (Nadal et al., 2014a). O'Keefe et al. (2015) found evidence which may support the notion that microaggressions act to thwart feelings of acceptance and belonging, which therein increases vulnerability and risk of suicide. In particular, O'Keefe et al. noted that depressive symptoms act to mediate the relationship between microaggressions and suicidal ideation. Similar findings were also produced by Hollingsworth et al. (2017), who investigated mental health outcomes associated with microaggressions in a sample of 135 African American adults. Specifically, Hollingsworth et al. found that feelings of thwarted belongingness, and perceived burdensomeness resulted in increased risk of suicide. Suicide remains to be an ongoing and pervasive societal issue which causes a ripple effect amongst friends, family members, schools,

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and communities. Microaggressions which thwart feelings of belongingness, exacerbate depression, and lower self-esteem therefore represent particularly concerning forms of subtle discrimination which should be explored, addressed, and remediated without hesitation. As such, microaggressions frequently occur within the context of both academic and workplace settings, and have the ability to exacerbate mental health concerns.

Microaggressions within Counseling

Microaggressions are exceedingly pervasive in society, even to the extent that they repeatedly occur within even the most sensitive realms where cultural competence is both expected and mandated; such as in counseling. This is particularly disheartening given that minority group members may hope to find a sense of solace in counseling with the presupposition that they will be entering into a safe space where they can process and gain emotional distance from these experiences; only to have them re-enacted. While no extant literature on Indigenous Peoples' experiences of microaggressions in counseling could be located, researchers have explored these experiences for racial-ethnic minorities as a whole (Davis et al., 2016; Hook et al., 2016; Owen et al., 2014). Furthermore, the experiences of clients (Davis et al., 2016; Hook et al., 2016; Owen et al., 2014) and therapists/ therapists in training (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Hernández et al., 2010) have been investigated.

Davis et al. (2016) explored how microaggressions impact counseling outcomes with a sample of racial and ethnic minorities. Davis et al. noted that microaggressions in counseling are perceived as falling within a subset of alliance ruptures which are related specifically to aspects of client identity. Davis et al. suggested that microaggressions also endanger the sense of safety clients typically assess for in a therapeutic relationship. Hook et al. (2016) found similar results while investigating the frequency of microaggressions in counseling with racial and ethnic

minority clients. More specifically, Hook et al. denoted that 81.7% of their sample experienced one or more racial microaggressions during their respective counseling process, indicating a high prevalence of these experiences within a context which is expected to be understanding, aware, and cognizant of such phenomena. Hook et al. further revealed that common microaggressions included an avoidance of discussing cultural issues, and a lack of awareness of stereotypes and bias. Davis et al. advised for cultural humility in counseling, suggesting that without it, poor counseling outcomes and a depreciated therapeutic alliance may result. Hook et al. also suggested that perceived cultural humility in counselors is equated with fewer microaggressions in counseling overall. Such results indicate that an increased awareness of the impact of microaggressions could potentially enhance therapeutic outcomes and also ensure that conventionally safe places, such as counseling offices, do in fact stay safe and meet the needs and expectations of clients with minority-identification statuses.

Owen et al. (2014) also investigated the impact of perceived microaggressions in therapy, including their impact on therapeutic progress overall. In particular, Owen et al. examined the counseling experiences of 120 university counseling center clients, including their individual perceptions of microaggressions in therapy. Owen et al. found that 53% of clients reported their therapist had propagated at least one microaggression throughout the course of therapy. Owen et al. elaborated that 76% of the participants took note that the microaggression encountered was not discussed in session which resulted in lowered working alliance ratings. Owen et al. also clarified that microaggressions which occur within therapy actively recapitulate oppression experienced from the larger society. Moreover, Owen et al. suggested that microaggressions negatively impact the therapeutic alliance. As such, Owen et al. recommended that

microaggressions should be explicitly addressed in session as a firm attempt to repair therapeutic relationship ruptures.

Owen et al. (2014) also argued that clinical supervisors should aid supervisees in enhancing their ability to engage in difficult dialogues with clients, thereby preparing for experiences of microaggressions to be immediately addressed. Moreover, Owen et al. expressed that supervisors are in a critical position to help trainees identify, and process microaggressions, including the costs related to modern racism. Owen et al. also highlighted the importance of practitioners receiving ongoing education such as in-service trainings which address microaggressions and the potential impact they can have on client outcomes in therapy. In particular, Owen et al. expounded that microaggressions which occur in therapy may cause ruptures based on offense regarding racial identity.

Owen et al. (2014) also suggested that a multicultural orientation which emphasizes the client's cultural heritage can be foundational for building trust in therapy. According to Owen et al., the therapeutic relationship should be one where the client is aware of the counselor's good intentions. Moreover, Owen et al. noted that therapists should also engage in ongoing reflection, and check-in regarding miscommunications which may have ruptured the therapeutic alliance. Owen et al. conveyed that this feedback may help counselors to identify how their words and actions contributed to ruptures so these incidents are not unwittingly recapitulated in session. As such, it appears that counseling training programs and work places may need to highlight the detrimental impact of microaggressions, the frequency of their occurrence, and the immense damage which these instances can incur on interpersonal working relationships, particularly with minority group members.

In addition to counseling sessions, microaggressions are known to transpire within the context of mental health professional training programs as well. For instance, Constantine and Sue (2007) explored the supervisory relationships between White supervisors and Black doctoral supervisees within counseling and clinical psychology programs. Constantine and Sue ultimately found that supervisors made stereotypical assumptions about both supervisees and Black clients. Moreover, supervisors appeared reluctant to provide feedback for their supervisees for fear of being perceived as racist, and these supervisees simultaneously appeared to focus on clinical weaknesses as opposed to clinical strengths (Constantine & Sue, 2007). Constantine and Sue therefore expressed that the experiential reality of Black supervisees becomes invalidated when microinvalidations occur, and ultimately acts to negate and exclude their thoughts and feelings which are dismissed as unimportant. As such, it is apparent that racial microaggressions cause harmful effects on Black supervisees, and are a detriment to supervisory relationships where impasses are created (Constantine & Sue, 2007).

In addition to directly harming the supervisory relationship, microaggressions also appear to negatively impact alternate facets of client care. For instance, Constantine and Sue (2007) found that White supervisors working with Black supervisees had a tendency to blame clients of Color for problems which are caused by historical oppression. Moreover, these White supervisors also offered culturally insensitive treatment recommendations, and invalidated racial-cultural issues within client care and the supervisory relationship (Constantine & Sue, 2007). The problematic nature of these dynamics is delineated as Constantine and Sue explain that clients of Color may be underserved when racial and cultural issues are not discussed in supervision relationships. As such, this may present the notion that these issues do not warrant enough significance to even be addressed (Constantine & Sue, 2007). Constantine and Sue, indicate that

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supervisory relationships that do not discuss cultural and racial considerations may not engender multiculturally competent services, which can then instigate important ethical implications. Conversely, supervisees who are provided with culturally responsive supervision of a cross-cultural nature may have an increased awareness of and sensitivity to cultural issues which occur within the context of counseling (Constantine & Sue, 2007). Ultimately, work by Constantine and Sue suggests that investigating experiences of microaggressions within counseling spheres may yield important information about both the supervisory relationship and client care. As such, it appears imperative that an effort be made to identify and address microaggressions which occur in training, employment, and client care.

Hernández et al. (2010) likewise investigated the workplace experiences of mental health professionals from both the United States and Canada following racial microaggressions. Hernández et al. similarly delineated the negative impact of microaggressions including resulting stress, feelings of hopelessness, and even resignation. Hernández et al. identified and focused on related coping strategies professionals implemented following incidents of microaggressions. Several forms of coping elucidated by Hernández et al. include *confrontation, collective organizing, self-care, spirituality, mentoring, support, documentation, and identifying key issues in responding to racial microaggressions*. Hernández et al. suggested that mentoring may be an especially important means to help professionals cope with racial microaggressions.

Given that Hernández et al. (2010) mentioned that mentoring is important to professional coping, it may be particularly disheartening that research by Constantine and Sue (2007) indicated that supervisors may perpetuate the occurrence of microaggressions, thus implying that not all supervisees who reach out for help from mentors will receive it. As such, it appears that professionals themselves encounter microaggressions within the field, and while they have

learned ways to adapt and cope with these experiences, their colleagues and supervisors may unwittingly, or perhaps even intentionally, continue to engage in these acts which undermine their wellbeing and that of their relationships. Furthermore, these instances of microaggressions even occur within fields which symbolically convey spaces of cultural sensitivity where non-judgmental perceptions of identity are expected to be acknowledge and communicated in a respectful and considerate manner. As such, it appears that conventionally safe spaces may not genuinely be safe, and microaggressions are pervasive, impacting many people and many identity statuses.

Religious and Spiritual Microaggressions

While comprehensive literature could not be located delineating the spiritual/religious microaggressions targeted at Indigenous groups, literature exists which exposes the presence of this phenomenon. Clark et al. (2014) specifically remarked upon one microaggression aimed towards Indigenous spirituality. More specifically, Clark et al. (2014) detailed the account of a participant who was subjected to a professor making jokes about Indigenous Peoples doing rain dances on a particularly stormy day. This experience resulted in the participant feeling uncomfortable, and subsequently reducing their participation in the class (Clark et al., 2014). Although these types of Indigenous spiritual microaggressions exist, they may be historically clustered within an umbrella category of racial/cultural microaggressions. Overall, this clustering is quite appropriate given the commonly known and inherent overlap between Indigenous racial/cultural identity, and Indigenous Traditional Spirituality. However, given the vast importance of spirituality within the daily lives of Indigenous Peoples, microaggressions aimed at Indigenous Spirituality are worth further investigation given the salience of this identity in the lives of so many Indigenous People. This clustering of Indigenous racial/cultural

microaggressions with spiritual microaggressions is certainly called for, however, it may also inadvertently detract from the complete exploration of religious-spiritual microaggressions in Indigenous populations which endorse traditional spirituality. Furthermore, Indigenous tribes, nations, and individuals are well known to endorse various types and degrees of Indigenous Spirituality, as such, it is important to explore the impact of spiritual microaggressions on Indigenous Peoples from diverse ethnic and tribal backgrounds.

While relatively few studies have explored religious/spiritual microaggressions within Indigenous communities, microaggression research has been conducted on other religious minority groups, and other studies investigating religious experiences have also incidentally yielded information suggestive of microaggression experiences. Once such study by Dupper et al. (2015), investigated the experiences of 50 adolescents attending public schools who identify with a religious minority group, including Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, and Universalist Unitarian. Despite not specifically intending to study microaggressions, Dupper et al. found that while some of the adolescent's experiences included what would be technically constituted as bullying and hate crimes, religious microaggressions were also present in the findings. Some of the major themes overall included; *minority status, precursors, teacher and adult roles,* and *perception of peer intent*. As such, it appears that similar themes previously discussed in racial microaggression research appear common in research surrounding spiritual/religious discrimination. Moreover, research by Dupper et al. also suggests that religious discrimination appears to be on a continuum, of which microaggressions is a part. Dupper et al. indicated that the concept and existence of religious microaggressions requires further in-depth exploration to account for the lack of research in this important topic area. Furthermore, Dupper et al. suggested that microaggressions should be investigated as a form of religious discrimination which has

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largely gone unaddressed. Moreover, Dupper et al. also noted that enhanced awareness is needed to elucidate the lived experiences of those whom these religious microaggressions are incurred upon.

Nadal et al. (2015) also advocated for an awareness of how microaggressions impact the lives of individuals with intersectional multicultural identities. Specifically, Nadal et al. (2015) utilized qualitative research analysis to explore intersectional microaggressions amongst people who identify as women, multiracial, LGBT, and Filipino-American. Nadal et al. found themes such as *exoticization of women of color*, *disapproval of LGBTQ identity by racial, ethnic, and religious groups*, *assumptions of inferiority or criminality in men of color*, *and gender based stereotypes in Muslim women and men*. For instance, Nadal et al. (2015) specifically described an instance where an individual who identifies as lesbian was told by a friend who is Christian, that she was religiously "condemned" (p. 9) due to her sexual orientation, despite the fact that she also identified as Christian. As such, it appears that individuals with multiple intersecting identities face microaggressions which others do not, and that this discrimination is based on the unique intersection of their religious or spiritual beliefs and other minority identity statuses. Nadal et al. elaborated that clinicians should understand how intersecting identities impact therapeutic dynamics and should teach clients about not only the existence of microaggressions but should help them facilitate coping mechanisms to defuse the daily negative impact of these experiences on people's lives.

Forrest-Bank and Dupper (2016) were one such group that effectively explored how religious minority students cope with religious discrimination such as microaggressions. Forrest-Bank and Dupper utilized a sample of 50 students who identify as religious minority groups and found several associated themes; *the importance of religious affiliation and community, response*

to negative incidents, influence of parental religiosity, parents as advocates and expert
consultants, to have or not have friends from other religions, perceptions of teachers, and the
school culture needs to change. Forrest-Bank and Dupper denoted the importance of promoting
resilience and positive religious identity in minority students while simultaneously acting to alter
school environments to make them genuinely safe spaces for all students. Forrest-Bank and
Dupper delineated that religion may be a positive coping mechanism for youth which impacts
their behavioral and emotional health overall. Despite the fact that religious identity may be a
coping mechanism for youth, Indigenous People are consistently expected to acculturate to
White dominant culture (Hill et al. 2010). Engaging in cultural practices is often either directly
or indirectly discouraged, thus threatening the wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples who may use
these practices to cope with distress (Hill et al., 2010).

Furthermore, Forrest-Bank and Dupper (2016) also explained that microaggressions can
be depicted as stressful, complex experiences where recipients may have a difficult time
discerning if harm was intentional or accidentally conveyed. As such, Forrest-Bank and Dupper
noted that it may be difficult for recipients to address and confront experiences of
microaggressions for fear that they may be socially excluded or cause relational discord. People
of Color may have difficulty discerning whether or not to confront perpetrators because of fear
that they may experience shame, guilt, regret or remorse from addressing the incident (Sue et al.
2008; Nadal et al., 2015). This decision may therefore cause psychological distress, as the target
may fear being labeled as a negative representation of their minority group (Nadal et al., 2015).

Kim (2016) similarly explored the relationship between well-being and microaggressions
and found a mediating role of perceived support from religious sources. Kim utilized a sample of
144 ethnic minority students who identified as Christian to investigate microaggressions, and

wellbeing. Kim denoted that those who endured more racial microaggressions were less likely to report having meaningful religious support. As such, Kim found that congregational support enhanced psychological wellbeing in minority students, therefore demonstrating that religious support may benefit individuals, particularly in minority group members, who endure microaggressions.

Hill, Kim, and Williams (2010) similarly expressed that ties to Indigenous Culture also act as protective factors to mitigate the likelihood of experiencing psychological symptoms such as those indicative of depression. Indigenous Peoples who engage in cultural practices at higher than average levels have a 29% reduced probability of incurring depressive symptoms (Hill et al., 2010; Whitbeck et al., 2002). Involvement in cultural practices such as powwows, and other traditions may enhance cultural identification and feelings of belongingness which are protective factors (Hill et al., 2010). These findings indicate the potential importance of the availability of religious and spiritual support for Indigenous Peoples who experience microaggressions. Communities which have been historically reprimanded for engaging in faith activities may benefit from having available resources wherein spiritually and religiously tailored support can be offered which fits with their respective worldview.

While Forrest-Bank and Dupper (2016) noted that students have a strong capacity to manage stress resulting from these instances of religious discrimination, the negative effects incurred may include damaged religious identity, and persisting emotional scars. Forrest-Bank and Dupper elaborated that some recipients may also experience anger, and subsequently engage in fighting and arguing which are then perceived as behavioral problems. Forrest-Bank and Dupper also indicated that religious based discrimination has been researched significantly less frequently than ethnic or racial discrimination, which is potentially detrimental given the

potential impact that these microaggressions have on the mental and physical wellbeing of those whom they are incurred upon. For instance, Kim (2016) noted that health implications associated with microaggressions in non-Christian ethnic and religious minority communities may be distinct compared to Christian groups, and should therefore be highlighted. Forrest-Bank and Dupper (2016) also noted that religious differences and discrimination embody central issues which impact identity development in youth populations, and that as such, collaborative efforts are required to implement necessary changes within institutions to provide safe and inviting atmospheres for all.

Summary and Rationale for the Study

Empirical evidence clearly demonstrates the harmful effects of experiencing microaggressions, particularly within ethnic/racial minority populations, including those with intersecting identities. Jones and Galliher (2015) suggested that open dialogue illuminating the frequency with which microaggressions occur, along with recommendations for how to reduce microaggressions is needed. Nadal et al. (2014b) advised that research investigating individual racial minority groups may be important given that major differences between racial minority groups' experiences of microaggressions have been discovered. Clark et al. (2014) also suggested that Indigenous populations should be distinguished from other minority communities as a means to shed light on the continued impact of colonialism, as well as ongoing experiences of adversity. Clark et al. (2011) likewise recommended the reconfiguration of student codes of conduct in higher education to address Indigenous microaggressions.

Previously discussed authors have made valiant efforts to elucidate racial microaggressions, religious/spiritual microaggressions, and microaggressions which impact multiple intersecting identities of minority group members. Yet, there remains a gap in the

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literature where the cross-section of Indigenous identity, and spirituality remains to be investigated in relation to microaggression experiences. There is a strong need to further investigate the impact of microaggressions in Indigenous populations given the severely damaging physical and psychological detriments which may accompany these experiences. A paucity of literature also exists delineating spiritual/religious microaggressions within the existing body of literature, indicating a gap which can be filled in the spirit of social justice. This proposed study has a high likelihood of illuminating and subsequently preventing current acts of harm which go largely unacknowledged. ISMs require more meticulous investigation, as clustering these experiences with racial microaggressions may not provide the specified attention they deserve. Exploring spiritual microaggressions may also facilitate further steps to heal the soul wound which has been unjustly incurred upon Indigenous Peoples of North America who rightly deserve a more promising future without condemnation of their spiritual heritage.

Proposed Research

Within this research, the context in which Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions occur will be discussed, including relationships to perpetrators, and how interpersonal relationships shifted or changed as a result of these experiences. The thoughts, emotions, and behavioral responses to microaggressions will also be explored to understand the immediate and long-term impacts of microaggression experiences on Indigenous Peoples. Next, microaggressions which occur within the context of the mental health field, particularly within supervisory relationships in training programs, will be discussed in-depth. Means to facilitate coping with spiritual microaggressions will also be highlighted. Suggested policy changes and organizational alterations which may prevent microaggressions from occurring or mitigate the frequency and severity of microaggressions will also be delineated. Finally, a summary of recommendations for

future research on Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions (ISM) and other related topics will be outlined.

An Explication of the Study Rationale: Part III

Purpose of the Study

In this dissertation, the investigation of microaggressions experienced by Indigenous Peoples will be taken a step forward to effectively elucidate the intersection of ethnicity and religion/spirituality. Indigenous participants will have the opportunity to describe experiences of microaggressions wherein their traditional spirituality was the main target of the offense. While racial and cultural microaggressions have been explored within Indigenous populations, spiritual/religious microaggressions are yet to receive explicit investigation without being clustered globally into umbrella categories.

The primary purpose of this research is to identify and analyze spiritual microaggressions which have been directed toward Indigenous mental health professionals and professionals in training. This will include descriptions of these accounts, including relational and environmental impacts, coping responses, and resolutions related to these microaggression experiences. Sue (2010a) indicated that the cumulative effect of microaggressions may be detrimental to the well-being of minority group members. As such, this research represents a significant undertaking to obtain valuable data which may later be used in preventative efforts to address subtle racism and discrimination within mental health domains, academic domains, and amongst the general population in the interest of Indigenous Populations.

In order to give voice to the experiences of Indigenous Peoples while exploring a phenomenon not previously explicitly studied in academic literature, it is important that the words of Indigenous Peoples themselves be used to share this narrative. It is also important that

the frequency of microaggressive themes be accounted for so that information can be provided about the regularity of these experiences across individuals. For these reasons, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, henceforward referred to as (IPA), was chosen as the primary method of investigation for this research topic.

Smith et al. (2009) note that IPA is a qualitative approach which helps people to explore and understand their lived experiences. IPA is based on the premise that reality is subjective, and researchers are interested in understanding what occurs when an everyday lived experience suddenly takes on significance and meaning for an individual (Smith et al., 2009). This focus on exploring lived experiences of microaggressions will therefore ensure that a rhetoric of social justice is encapsulated throughout the entirety of the data analysis process by acknowledging inherent differences in the lived realities amongst individuals. As such, IPA methodology appears to be a strong fit for the collection and analysis of this data, particularly given the nature of this phenomenon of interest. That is, studying spiritual microaggressions which Indigenous Peoples experience is a significant endeavor given that this phenomenon is scarcely described in academic domains, and a paucity of literature exists on the topic. IPA methodology will therefore allow for descriptive accounts which are texturally rich in nature, thus describing the subjective lived experiences of individuals, while simultaneously gathering a basis for understanding how and when these microaggressions occur, how people cope with them, and what may help mitigate them. The IPA methodology exemplified by Smith et al. (2009) is also inherently rigorous in nature as it incorporates contextualization, function, and numeration throughout the analysis process (Beck, 2021). As such, the degree of precision composed within this analysis structure will help to ensure quality control, and to encapsulate the full meaning which is being

offered within participant statements and subsequent themes. Overall, IPA represents a strong methodological fit for a topic of this nature and of this importance.

Introduction to Research Questions

Research pertaining to Indigenous Peoples is accumulating within the scientific body of literature, however, it is imperative that a refocusing back to Indigenous ways of knowing occur within the context of academic research. This may help to enhance multicultural competence and contribute to the decolonization of knowledge. Indigenous People have always known the truth of their own phenomenological experiences and can attest to the damage which has been incurred by colonial thought and structure within society. Oral story-telling traditions passed between generations document the narratives of Indigenous Peoples who have been exposed to institutionalized racism, ethnic and cultural discrimination, and spiritual genocide; the remnants of which are embedded into their daily experiences through the enactment of microaggressions. As such, though experiences of spiritual microaggressions are anecdotally known to be true amongst those who directly perceive them, in order for these experiences to be legitimized within the dominant culture and taken seriously by those in power, it is important to document these instances, and their resulting impact. It is hoped that the information collected will contribute positively to social change and awareness. The present work therefore aims to provide a space where the voices of Indigenous Peoples can be heard, via a qualitative research platform. It is hoped that these voices will not go unheard and that these experiences will subsequently be validated and supported by predominantly accepted institutional power structures.

As far as this author is aware, Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions are yet to be explicitly researched in depth. Extant Indigenous microaggression research within the current body of scientific literature appears to speak primarily to the intersection of Indigenous

ethnic/cultural identification and racial discrimination. Indigenous microaggression research within the current body of literature does however provide preliminary support that Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions exist. As such, ISM's have therefore been briefly commented on within Indigenous microaggression research without being explicitly identified as such. For instance, research by Clark et al. (2014) described a microaggression within an academic setting where a professor joked about Natives engaging in a rain dance on a stormy day; which therefore represents an instance where traditional spiritually was subtly snubbed and denigrated in a microaggressive fashion for the entertainment of others. Canel-Çınarbaş and Yohani (2019) also suggested that Indigenous Peoples experience microaggressions which fit the theme of invalidation and denial of identity, spirituality, culture, and history. As such, this author aims to explicitly explore the extent to which Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions (ISM) exist and how they are manifested.

Research Questions

Research Question 1

Q1: What types of spiritual microaggressions occur amongst Indigenous populations?

- Do these fit the Sue et al. (2007) microaggression taxonomy?

Research Question 2

Q2: How do ISMs impact Indigenous Peoples?

- What feelings and consequences arise due to ISM experiences?

- How do Indigenous Peoples respond to ISM?

- How do Indigenous Peoples cope with ISM?

Research Question 3

Q3: a) How can ISMs and other microaggressions be mitigated in frequency and

severity?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III presents a broad overview of the research design of the present study, describes participants and participant recruitment procedures, researchers and research team characteristics, and provides a step by step account of the Interpretive Phenomenological Methodology and Analysis utilized to complete the analysis of this study. Final, the chapter concludes with a subsection detailing trustworthiness which has been embedded into the research design and analysis from conceptualization onward.

Overview of Research Design

Given that this study represents exploratory research, a qualitative research design was implemented to address the research questions. In particular, descriptive exploratory research requires the phenomenon to be investigated in a manner which is both structured and unstructured with open ended questions. As such, open-ended interview questions were created and administered to willing participants. Indigenous mental health professionals and professionals in training (i.e., graduate students) completed a semi-structured interview regarding spiritual/religious microaggressions. A semi-structured interview format was utilized, which allowed the primary investigator to ask additional follow-up questions as needed to better understand the phenomenological experiences of participants. Participants were provided with electronic access to their own interview content, and were allotted a two-week period thereafter

to add comments on sections where they may have misspoken, or wanted to provide additional elaboration after having time to reflect on their experiences post-interview.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used for the purposes of data analysis which was conducted by the primary investigator. Specifically, the Smith et al. (2009) IPA methodology was implemented as a means to meticulously code interview transcripts. As such, this methodology primarily consists of 5 steps which will be described in more detail in the data analysis section below. The help and perspective of an external auditor was utilized to provide recommendations for data analysis. Superordinate themes and subthemes of a similar nature were grouped together, and frequency counts were assigned to each thematic construct area to determine *frequently endorsed themes*, *commonly endorsed themes*, and *rarely endorsed themes*. Themes which were rarely endorsed were excluded from the overarching superordinate and sub-theme findings due to marginal thematic category endorsement.

A broad methodological overview of this study has been presented for readers to grasp the structure of this descriptive exploratory research. Subsequent sub-sections will delineate aspects of each phase of the research for further clarification and explanation. These sections will also include a rationale for selected aspects of the research process, as well as delineating methodological checks and balances to ensure qualitative research rigor and trustworthiness.

Participants and Participant Recruitment Procedures

Recruiting

Initial attempts at recruiting participants were completed by sending out fliers to organizations and groups likely to comprise of individuals meeting the intended sample criteria. The following set of inclusion criteria were instituted to determine potential participants' eligibility; firstly, participants must self-identify as an Indigenous Person, they also needed to be

adults age 18 or older, and they had to be mental health professionals or graduate students in the mental health field and endorse at least some aspects of Traditional Indigenous Spirituality. Mental health professionals and students were classified as those individuals employed or studying in any of the following fields: mental health counseling, rehabilitation counseling, addictions counseling, counseling psychology, clinical psychology, school psychology, psychiatry, social work, psychiatric nursing, and marriage and family therapy. Master's students, and Ph.D. students were accepted as participants given their likelihood of having knowledge pertaining to the existence of microaggressions. Participants could identify as female, male, or transgender (two-spirited, or berdache), and could be of any sexual orientation. This sample therefore represents an intensity sample which included participants who are more likely than members of the general population to have knowledge and awareness of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions. In this case, an intensity sample is being utilized in an effort to obtain information-rich cases that are likely to manifest the phenomenon of study in a profound way (Hernández, Carranza, & Almeida, 2010; Patton, 2002).

Recruitment fliers were distributed to organizational listservs including that of the Society of Indian Psychologists in the hopes of reaching participants who would meet inclusion criteria. In some cases, organizations did not respond to recruitment requests, and in other cases, research recruitment requests had to be formally approved prior to being dispersed amongst organizational listservs. Permission was granted by the Society of Indian Psychologists (SIP) to allow the primary investigator to recruit via their listserv where the research information was posted. The primary investigator was also allowed to set up a recruiting table at their annual conference in Logan, Utah. This allowed the primary researcher a space to hand out research fliers and answer any questions that prospective participants might have about the research. A

member of SIP who is fundamental to orchestrating the conference also announced at the conference that the primary researcher was recruiting participants, and provided the primary researcher with an opportunity to mention recruitment efforts over the loud speaker during a conference lunch segment. The primary researcher provided their contact information to interested participants who were unable to interview that day so that they could follow up at a later time to schedule an interview. The Society of Indian Psychologists also provided private meeting spaces where the interviewer could meet with participants who were able to be interviewed the same day of the conference. If participants were unable to schedule an interview during the SIP Conference, the primary interviewer followed up with them and provided the options of interviewing via videoconferencing or phone call at their earliest convenience.

In-person recruiting was also enacted throughout the course of the study wherein the research team members were able to share information about the nature of the study to others who may meet inclusion criteria and who may be interested prospective participants. Snowball or chain sampling also took place given that Indigenous colleagues in mental health represent a relatively small cultural/academic community. Once a volunteer expressed interest in the study, they were contacted and provided with a confidentiality agreement, a demographic questionnaire, and a set of interview prompts including definitions and relevant examples of microaggressions, including microassaults, microinvalidations, and microinsults. They were also asked to determine what interview method they would prefer (i.e., phone, video-conferencing, or in person), and were asked to schedule at time at their convenience in a private location of their own choosing.

Informed Consent

Upon formally indicating interest in the study, participants were also provided participant consent forms detailing the procedures of the study, inclusion criterion, compensation, recording procedures and storage, and risks and benefits of the study. Providing information about recording was particularly important given that many Indigenous Peoples may not feel comfortable with recording taking place; in fact, and at this stage of the process, a participant discontinued their interest in being interviewed because they did not feel comfortable with the idea of being recorded, as such, this candidate's participation stopped at that point, and an interview was not conducted. The informed consent was provided both in written form, and was recounted verbally at the beginning of each interview to ensure understanding of the information included in this form (see Appendix C).

Demographics and Demographic Forms

Demographic forms were sent to the participant to complete in advance prior to the interview to ensure that they met criteria for the study (See Appendix A). That is, only participants who identified with some aspects of Indigenous Spirituality were interviewed. Whereas some participants were anticipated to be highly involved with spiritual ceremonies, roles, beliefs, and practices, others were assumed to only minimally or partially identify with traditional spiritual beliefs and practices. It was therefore imperative to ascertain that participants were an Indigenous-identified mental health professional or student who also endorsed at least some aspects of Traditional Indigenous Spirituality in order for them to perceptively recall ISM experiences as salient and meaningful life events.

Participants were also asked to provide information related to other multicultural identity statuses, including their gender, sexual orientation, age, state/province/territory of residence,

country of residence, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, religious/spiritual identification, professional

mental health field, worker status, student status (professional program, university affiliation,

year of program), socioeconomic status, and related contact information. It was imperative that

this demographic information also be collected as it is quite clear from the above literature

review that oftentimes microaggressions are aimed towards the intersection of various minority

identity statuses as opposed to being targeted at a sole identity status.

All participants either already obtained, or were in the process of pursuing, an advanced

degree in a mental health field. The rationale for this inclusion criteria was a desire for an

intensity sample, which would consist of participants who could proficiently and retroactively

recall ISM experiences while also speaking to how these examples impact mental health

professionals and graduate students in the field. Moreover, an intensity sample of Indigenous

mental health professionals and students would allow for culturally competent coping

mechanisms and recommendations for mitigating microaggressions to be discussed.

Participants were given the option of creating a pseudonym for themselves to be used

amidst participant quotes in the study write-up; while some participants chose to create their own

pseudonyms, some did not, in which case one was created for them by the primary investigator.

The pseudonyms were also used to connect track data to ensure that participant names did not

appear outside of the demographic form or consent forms.

Interview Questions and Protocol

The interview consisted of a 60 to 90-minute semi-structured interview protocol

administered to solicit in-depth information related to the participant's experiences via open-

ended questions. Interview questions, prompts, and ISM examples were dispersed prior to the

interview with the intent of priming participants to reflect upon both their personal and

professional experiences of ISM. Questions centered around the areas of the identification, description, and response/resolution to ISM's. These questions also focused on resultant emotional experiences, impact on relationships, impact on the participant's experience of the work environment, subsequent coping mechanisms utilized, and related policy/change recommendations to mitigate the frequency and severity of microaggressions. Follow-up questions were also implemented at the discretion of the interviewer to elicit further information, to procure depth of experience, and to aid in clarification throughout the interview process. Moreover, the interviewer utilized interpretations of meaning, feeling, and summarizations throughout the interview to act as a continual tracking process whereby participants had the opportunity to agree with interviewer interpretations and/or correct the interviewer to ensure that their responses were being accurately interpreted in the moment by the researcher who would eventually be coding their interview. This interviewer style was also multiculturally appropriate given that participants were describing intimate aspects of their spiritual and cultural identity that had been largely denigrated within public, professional, and personal life domains. As such, many participant responses were clearly accompanied by expressions of emotion imbued with sadness, anger, shock, and a recollection of distress that brought many to tears throughout this process. As such, it was imperative that the interviewer provide short summarizations, and interpretations of meaning and feeling to fully encapsulate the felt emotion and physical indications of emotional expressions which were present within the interview process. Moreover, a cold, inattentive, or unengaged interpersonal style would not have been conducive to, or congruent with, the often warm and kind interpersonal approach of many Indigenous Peoples. As such, the interviewer who identifies as Indigenous utilized an interview style which was both authentic and which would be deemed multiculturally competent and appropriate for

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interviewing Indigenous Peoples sharing vulnerable information with a researcher. Interviews took place in person, via phone, or video call. The interview was also created in the spirit of social justice with the hope of understanding how people cope with ISM, and how to help mitigate the frequency and severity of microaggressions. The interviewer also inquired as to how the participant felt about the overall interview process, and would have assessed for risk of harm to self, including suicidal ideation if necessary. This study consisted of one round of interviews only.

Post-Interview Process

Interviews were transcribed verbatim in entirety and checked for accuracy. Inaudible commentary was noted so participants had the opportunity to denote what was said in that section once their interview transcript was returned to them. Participants were given access to their interview transcript which was locked for editing. Participants were given the opportunity to add comments to their interview to ensure they were represented in a way that was conducive to their lived experience, and also to detail any information which had been previously overlooked within the context of the interview. This process is part of "member checking" (Hill et al., 2005, p. 202) and was used to enhance ethicality and quality control by providing participants the opportunity to ensure they have been represented in a way that is congruent with their intended manner. This measure was taken as a respectful means to safe guard the opinions and subjective experiences of Indigenous People who have historically been taken advantage of and largely misrepresented in literature and media.

Participants were informed both in the informed consent process, and again once the transcript was sent to them that they had several options in relation to their transcript; a) They could review the transcript and provide comments on it to clarify or elaborate on their responses,

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and then send it back to the primary investigator for coding/analysis, b) They could review the transcript and choose not to add comments/elaborations/clarifications and let the primary investigator know so that the transcript could be moved forward immediately into the coding phase, or c) Participants could choose not to review the transcript, and in the event that they did not respond to the interviewer in two weeks' time, it would be automatically moved forward in the coding/analysis process without additional commentary. As such, participants were expected to use their own discretion in this process to ensure they were being accurately represented within the context of the interview data. For this study, 1 participant chose to add comments, 3 replied indicating it could be transcribed as is, and 4 did not respond.

Participants were compensated $20 for their time which was meant to provide adequate compensation, while not being enough to unwittingly coerce those who necessitate the funds to engage in the interview process. Interviews were carried forth with the anticipation that the interview process itself may also hold intrinsic value for participants. In some cases, participants denied compensation, and seemed more than happy to engage interview without recompense.

Efforts were taken to omit identifying information to ensure participant confidentiality. For instance, if a participant included the name or year of their program, institution, or place of employment, this information was redacted. Furthermore, the names of professional mentors, colleagues, or perpetrators were also omitted for their protection. In some cases, the partner and child status, and even the identified gender of participants was removed from transcripts to protect the identities of participants. This was important given that the academic Indigenous community may be a tightknit community wherein the identity of participants could be guessed by others. Pseudonyms were created by participants or by the primary researcher and used to protect their identities. Microaggression themes are also presented in aggregate form in the

analysis section of this dissertation. Moreover, participant quotes included within the analysis section are only those that are de-identified in nature. Information was stored on a secured electronic cloud and in a double locked compartment which only researchers had access to.

Participant Sample

Participants in this study consisted of a total of 8 mental health graduate students and/or professionals who self-identify as Indigenous Peoples of North America and who endorse at least some aspects of Traditional Indigenous Spirituality. Proof of tribal affiliation, or status, was not expected to be produced, as this may represent a practice which most certainly could potentially be viewed as invalidating. The sample consisted of a total of 6 female identified participants and 2 male identified participants, with a total of 4 mental health graduate students and 4 mental health professionals. Additional information related to participants is being intentionally omitted from the research write-up due to concerns that additional information could prospectively lead to the identification of members of the study given the relatively small subset of individuals who identify as both Indigenous and Mental Health Professionals.

Researchers

Research team members include the primary investigator's academic advisor, Dr. Rachel Navarro who identifies as a Latina Woman, Dr. Tamba-Kuii Bailey who identifies as an African American man, along with two fellow Indigenous graduate students, Amanda Young who identifies as Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara (MHA Nation) and Megan Smith who identifies with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI). Dr. Bailey was located as the auditor of the research project through the recommendation of Dr. Navarro, who was aware of Dr. Bailey's thorough understanding and expertise in qualitative research methodology and rigor. Potential graduate research team members were identified by the primary researcher as fellow Indigenous

graduate students within the Counseling Program at UND who have an interest in Indigenous advocacy and research. As a base criterion for graduate team member selection, team members had to have completed at least one graduate level course surrounding multiculturalism. Overall, this team encompassed individuals with variable professional experience and multicultural backgrounds to ensure that relevant biases of the primary researcher would be challenged as necessary to ensure quality control. The primary investigator also met with the Indigenous graduate students on the team to review a list of questions and prompts pertaining to exploring our own biases related to ISM experiences, so self-discovery via reflective self-analysis could occur prior to the primary investigator engaging in the coding process. The Indigenous team members came together for a 2-hour meeting to share their reflections amongst each other. Implications for research were subsequently explored and taken into consideration for the data analysis processes. The discussion of this information ultimately acted as a check and balance for quality control for the primary investigator to elucidate biases which may influence data interpretation. For instance, one of these potential biases included the primary investigator believing that coping skills would likely be highly divergent in nature, while the Indigenous team members suggested that more traditional coping would likely be endorsed by participants which ultimately ended up being true.

The primary investigator initially became interested in this topic after reviewing microaggression literature and noticing the paucity of literature discussing Indigenous microaggressions. The primary investigator also reviewed literature on religious/spiritual microaggressions and noticed that research had not been yet completed to investigate the experiences of those who endorse Indigenous Spirituality. The primary investigator believes that one reason that this topic is yet to be explored may be due to the fact that Indigenous Spirituality

often goes unrecognized within the general public as representing a legitimate spiritual identification status. This represents a microinvalidation in and of itself; wherein the spiritual and religious experiences of Indigenous Peoples have not yet been explicitly validated by academic literature sources within the context of microaggression research.

The primary investigator identifies as Metis Cree, from Alberta, Canada, and as a mixed-race person has been subject to microaggressive experiences accordingly, including those which are considered to be ISM, both within and outside of mental health contexts. Furthermore, the primary researcher identifies as being extremely spiritual, and while not explicitly identifying with any one sole religious or spiritual identification, does endorse many aspects of Traditional Indigenous Spirituality. For instance, the primary investigator deems spirituality to be embedded within, and impossible to extract from life itself, similar to many who endorse Traditional Indigenous Spirituality. The primary researcher also engages in and endorses daily prayer, belief in spirits being present amongst us at all times, belief in a universal Creator or God, use of sage and sweetgrass and herbal remedies, and the belief that dreams represent messages directly from the divine, and therefore include experiences directly within divine realms. The primary investigator has also attended sweats, volunteered at Powwows, and has a strong endorsement of collectivistic beliefs, including the interconnectedness of all living beings. The primary researcher has also engaged in advocacy to raise awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, in addition to researching Native American Student Success amongst other Indigenous graduate students, and therefore believes that increased academic and public efforts need to take place in order to enhance the quality of life for Indigenous Peoples, and to mitigate risk factors and barriers to health and wellness.

Interpretive Phenomenological Methodology and Analysis

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was utilized to code the interviews given the research topic is one in which a phenomenon is being explored for what is likely the first time within academic literature. As such, it was important to use a phenomenological coding methodology which would allow for thick descriptions to be yielded which would speak not only to the subjective lived experiences of the participants, but also to the multicultural context in which the phenomenon occurred (Morrow, 2005). Moreover, the IPA methodology presented by Smith et al. (2009) is one in which a variety of exploratory coding mechanisms are implemented which give rise to codes that are both comprehensive and include information about the description of the phenomenon, linguistic use of the participant, and which places the data within the conceptual context of the interview as a whole (Beck, 2021). The IPA methodology put forth by Smith et al. (2009) is also one in which quotes are embedded within the data results write-up itself, which was important to the primary investigator so that Indigenous experiences and voices could be shared and appreciated by others (Beck, 2021). Moreover, the Smith et al. (2009) IPA methodology allows for participants to share their narrative accounts of their subjective experiences, and which also uses quotes to depict data; both of which hold deference to traditional Indigenous narrative forms of story-telling. Moreover, throughout the interview transcribing process, it was clear that participants provided a number of meaningful and profound quotes, which are referred to as gems (Smith, 2011, as cited in Beck, 2021, Step 6. Looking for Patterns Across Cases, para. 2), which concisely and accurately portray examples of these ISM experiences, which professionals in the field, and the public could benefit from reading, in order to grasp even briefly, an empathetic understanding of the types of ISM experiences Indigenous Peoples incur on a day to day basis.

The Smith et al. (2009) version of IPA data analysis typically includes a number of steps which take place in the following order: (a) Step 1: Reading and re-reading; (b) Step 2: Initial noting, (c) Step 3: Developing emergent themes; (d) Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes; (e) Step 5: Moving to the next case; and (f) Step 6: Looking at patterns across cases (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). The remainder of this subsection will therefore delineate the data analysis process that the primary investigator implemented.

Step 1: Reading and re-reading: This step consists of researchers immersing themselves within the interview data (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). Given that the primary investigator acted as the interviewer, interview transcriber, and primary data analyst, this step was inherently embedded into the research process. In order to ensure that this step was fully completed with the spirit of IPA, interviews were again re-read prior to initial data coding.

Step 2: Initial noting (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). This step consists of labeling meaningful data chunks within the transcript with descriptive, linguistic, and contextual codes (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). This meant that every statement made by the participant was coded to ensure that the full meaning of the participant's interview was being captured by relevant codes. Descriptive codes are noted to be those that highlight the focus of the content that participants share including a description of the phenomenon taking place (Beck, 2021). These descriptions acted to effectively summarize what was occurring in the interview in a more concise fashion than the participant discussed. Next, the linguistic codes represented salient aspects of the participant's language (Beck, 2021). Linguistic codes helped the primary investigator to decontextualize information included within the interview to focus solely on words and use of language at an interpretive level which was more conceptual in nature (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). Linguistic codes therefore included those that explicitly commented on

aspects of the participant's speech including tone, cadence, choice of word phrasing, word repetition, word order, and linguistic word choice. Implementing the use of linguistic codes allowed a focus to be placed not only on the interpretive content of what was being disclosed, but also on the specific way that a statement was being said and the way in which it was being delivered. Contextual/conceptual coding ultimately proved to be the most helpful throughout the coding process as it progressed. Conceptual comments included those which represent the researcher's interpretations at a conceptual level (Beck, 2021).

After the initial first few cases, the conceptual codes substantially contributed to creation of emergent themes; the reason for this likely being that the primary investigator became attuned to keenly noticing information which would typically be included in both the descriptive and linguistic codes and integrated this information into the contextual codes. Toward the latter half of the cases, linguistic and descriptive codes were dropped from the coding process due to the holistic understanding that the primary investigator had gained from instituting these codes in earlier transcripts. This allowed for contextual codes to include significant descriptive and linguistic information in a comprehensive fashion without having to overtly restate this information again in the exploratory coding process. It is also worth noting that this primary investigator was exceedingly meticulous throughout the entirety of the coding process, therefore contextual codes created throughout represented the entirety of data which was significant to the meaning of the phenomenon being discussed, and likely represents data coding which is exceptionally comprehensive in nature. Within the context of this study, the descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual codes were placed on the right side of a participant transcript within lengthy researcher comments so that they could be easily viewed amongst the participant interview data itself.

Step 3: Developing emergent themes (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). In this stage of the data analysis process, the primary investigator reviewed descriptive, linguistic, and contextual/conceptual exploratory codes, and amalgamated these to create emergent themes (Beck, 2021). These emergent themes represented the emerging essence of the participant interview and represented a concise overview of the meaning embedded within sentences and/or contiguous data chunks of the participant's interview (Beck, 2021). Beck (2021) suggests that these emergent themes represent a hermeneutic circle wherein the whole and the part are interpreted in relation to one another. Given that the emergent themes represented the part in relation to the whole, some of the contextual codes which represented the holistic essence of what a participant was saying were also able to be used as the foundation or entirety of some emergent themes. This was an occurrence that became particularly more salient and relevant as the coding process continued and the primary investigator became more experienced with the process of contextual coding and emergent theme creation. As such, the coding process became more efficient, and an analytical understanding of the data could be more quickly subsumed under the appropriate thematic area in which it ultimately resulted being sorted and placed. Throughout the remainder of this process the primary investigator remained vigilant in reviewing the original transcript and exploratory codes to ensure that the emergent themes remained accurate abstracted representations of original data. Within the context of this study, these themes were created in a left-hand side column, so that they could be presented alongside both the transcript and the exploratory comment coding. This organization allowed emergent themes to be easily checked for ongoing accuracy as both the exploratory codes and original transcript could be referred to as needed throughout the emergent theme creation process.

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). Once emergent themes were created, these were able to be reorganized and sorted into overarching thematic category clusters to determine superordinate themes and relevant subthemes. Within the context of this study, this meant copying all of the emergent themes in chronological order into a separate document which was then used to sort the emergent themes one by one into relevant category clusters. These emergent themes were initially sorted using key words and phrases which were salient to the meaning of the emergent theme, and which were then used to help create clustered categories through the processes of *abstraction, subsumption, function, contextualization, polarization, and numeration. Abstraction* is the process of clustering similar themes into a superordinate category (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). *Subsumption* is the process wherein an emergent theme becomes a superordinate theme in and of itself, wherein relevant themes are clustered around similarly related themes (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). *Function* represents the process of sorting emergent themes based on their particular function or performed use within a transcript (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). *Contextualization* represents the process wherein researchers search for contextual connections including culturally related themes and elements of a temporal nature (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). *Polarization* involves the process where emergent themes are analyzed to locate contrasting differences as opposed to similarities and are thus examined and clustered accordingly (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). *Numeration* is the process whereby a frequency count helps to determine how often an emergent theme is present and supported (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). Ultimately, salient and meaningful connections across emergent themes were located and transposed into larger categorical clusters which became labelled as Superordinate themes.

Within the context of this study, this process also included the additional step of sorting the emergent themes within each Superordinate theme cluster into relevant sub-themes. This was done to provide a richer and more thorough understanding of the data and to honor the comprehensiveness of the data that was originally provided by participants. After the data were sorted into Superordinate themes, graphic representations of the data structures and emergent themes were created to showcase this data and provide an overt means of recognizing the categorical groupings which manifested from this process. Graphic representations were also created to demonstrate how emergent themes were organized into relevant sub-theme clusters within each Superordinate theme as is recommended (Smith et al., 2009; Beck, 2021).

Step 5: Moving to the next case (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). This stage in the data analysis process represents one wherein the researcher has completed the entirety of coding for one transcript and moves onto the following transcript (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). Researchers within this stage of the data analysis need to intentionally allow other themes to emerge within successive interviews and ensure that they are not stifling the coding and clustering process by only including themes and categories that were present in prior interviews (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). Within the context of this study, the primary investigator was mindfully intentional in allowing new themes to emerge, in addition to accepting new sub-theme categories to emerge throughout the sorting process as well. While a number of Superordinate category themes naturally emerged from the data due to the types of interview questions being asked, other Superordinate themes which were new also emerged which helped add variety to the cases presented, and helped underscore the notion that all participants have unique lived experiences and views of reality which ultimately may not overlap with that of others, or which may only minimally overlap with that of the other participants.

Step 6: Looking at patterns across cases (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). This phase of the data analysis process is best encapsulated as a comprehensive cross-analysis wherein Superordinate themes and subthemes were analyzed across cases. This part of the data analysis procedure is known to be a creative process wherein some themes require renaming or reconfiguration (Beck, 2021; Smith et al., 2009). This step in the process is also one wherein the researchers can theoretically explain how superordinate themes represent shared narratives across participants (Beck, 2021). A table representing the themes of the overall participant group can be created to represent this step in the analysis process, and demonstrate how superordinate themes are composed of nested subthemes (Beck, 2021).

Within the context of this study, the cross-analysis process included an additional step of applying numeration to both the superordinate and subtheme categories (Smith et al., 2009). This helped to substantially reduce the amount of subtheme codes which were not transposed across cases, thus those themes which were rarely endorsed were precluded within the overarching themes of the participant sample. This process also helped to identify superordinate themes which were commonly endorsed across participant cases. In particular, subthemes and superordinate rows were assigned a numeric value based on how often they were endorsed by participants. In this case, a *frequently endorsed theme* represented one where more than half of participants endorsed it; (5-8 participants endorsed the theme). A *commonly endorsed theme* represented one where half or just less than half of participants endorsed a theme (3-4 participants endorsed the theme). While a *rarely endorsed theme* represented one which was infrequently or only minimally endorsed (1-2 participants endorsed the theme). Themes which were rarely endorsed were subsequently excluded from the overarching superordinate and sub-theme findings due to marginal thematic category endorsement, or alternatively, were subsumed

into alternative thematic areas where appropriate as a subtheme. It is, however, worth noting that a larger sample size may ultimately yield further data and information to substantiate the validation of rarely endorsed themes, and that future research should aim to procure more information about these less frequently endorsed themes to explore the extent to which they may be more commonly endorsed amongst other samples.

Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility was infused within the study via the use of thick descriptions, member checking, researcher reflexivity, use of an external auditor, and qualitative charting. In particular, the present research was designed to understand the context in which ISM's occur and the impact they have on multicultural minority participants thus leading to thick descriptions (Morrow, 2005). Moreover, each participant was asked to describe what religious/spiritual beliefs they endorsed and adhered to, thus allowing the substrate of the interview to be contextualized within the multicultural and spiritual worldview of the participant. The Smith et al. (2009) IPA methodology also includes exploratory coding that focuses on descriptive, linguistic, and contextual codes which comment explicitly on the context of the interview, thus leading to thick descriptions for every data chunk (Beck, 2021).

Credibility was also pronounced in the design and process of this research demonstrated by ongoing researcher reflexivity. The primary investigator received feedback from a number of sources including faculty members, classmates, research team members, and dissertation proposal committee. Moreover, this primary investigator continually challenged herself to review exploratory codes, and the raw transcript data itself throughout the creation of the emergent

themes to ensure that abstracted data was holding true to the original source data. The primary

investigator also demonstrated reflexivity by adhering to the auditor's recommendations.

Transcripts were also provided to participants for the purposes of participant checking

which allowed participants an opportunity to clarify and elaborate on responses if they chose to.

Validation was also continually used throughout the interview process as the interviewer

repeatedly engaged in the use of interpretations of meaning, feeling, and summarizations to

allow participants the opportunity to confirm or reject the interviewer's interpretation of their

experiences in real-time. An auditor was also involved in this project to act as a check and

balance to researcher conclusions, coding rationale, and ethical integrity. The auditor therefore

acted as both an expert in qualitative analysis, and as an unbiased researcher in the field of

Counseling Psychology who identifies as non-Indigenous. Hill et al. (2005) suggested that

qualitative charting data may also be a useful means of ensuring that data has been faithfully and

credibly represented. Implementing the use of visual data charts may allow for detailed feedback

at each stage of the data analysis process, and may enhance accuracy (Hill et al., 2005). As such,

charting was created throughout each step of the data analysis process, and these charts allowed

the data to be visually depicted in a way which demonstrated how thematic clusters hung

together conceptually. These charts were later reviewed by the auditor. As such, the mechanisms

for ensuring quality methodological rigor were seminal to the concluding research outcomes.

Transferability

To establish transferability, sections of this chapter have included a description of the

primary investigators ethnic background, including spiritual identification status to provide

information about the researcher as an instrument (Morrow, 2005). Moreover, sufficient

information has been provided pertaining to the context and processes of the research, the

participants, the research team members, and their relationships to help readers elucidate how findings may transfer to other samples (Morrow, 2005).

Confirmability

To avoid biased assumptions about the nature and consequences of ISM, the interviewer asked open-ended questions which did not overtly inquire as to experiences of discrimination (Houshmand et al., 2014). This cautious question formulation ultimately acted to ensure that questions were not leading in nature (Houshmand et al., 2014). Direct quotations are also included in the analyses section as a means of reinforcing the criteria of confirmability, which ensures that the data collected supports research conclusions (Houshmand et al., 2014). Moreover, findings have been presented in a manner wherein both the readers and any subsequent auditors will be able to conceptually understand the emergence of themes which are supported by participant quotes. Related audit trails were carefully recorded via charting so that each step of the IPA process can be checked if needed or desired (Morrow, 2005).

Dependability

The methodological steps which were applied to this study were explicitly delineated above, and data was tracked for each participant via charts and documents recording each step in the data analysis process from initial transcription to cross-analysis. As such, these documents represent a chronology of research processes, themes, and categories which created an audit trail which can be easily followed by others (Morrow, 2005). The external auditor associated with this research endeavor reviewed materials, including exploratory codes, emergent themes, sub-themes, superordinate themes, and the cross-analysis between and amongst participants.

Conclusion

Overall, this research study has been conceptualized and analyzed with a high degree of trustworthiness and qualitative rigor from the initiation of the project in its first stages, to the commencement and culmination of the data conclusions and cross-analysis. A number of measures have been taken to ensure that the data was interpreted with accuracy, and with a sense of truthful authenticity to adhere closely to the phenomenological meaning of the participant interviews. As such, the present research should represent that which is of quality nature, which also holds deference to voices of the Indigenous participants who helped create this meaning.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions represents a seminal study addressing the intersection of both racial and spiritual/religious microaggression experiences incurred upon Indigenous Peoples of North America. Indigenous populations represent an often understudied and diverse group of peoples who have resiliently endured a long and arduous collective past imbued with historical trauma including physical, cultural, and spiritual genocide enacted by White colonial invaders and proceeding generations. For many, if not all Indigenous Peoples, this historical trauma does not merely represent a narrative account of antiquity; instead, for most, remnants of colonial thought continue to influence their daily lived experiences and livelihood, despite effectively ignorant public assertions that racism is 'over' and that people have so-called 'religious freedom.' This descriptive exploratory study therefore offered an opportunity for Indigenous mental health professionals and graduate students to discuss their subjective experiences of ISM within the context of a safe interview space where their authentic lived experiences could be shared without fear of judgement, relegation, or reproach. As such, the following phenomenological descriptions and subjective accounts relate the authentic and true lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples, who are well aware of the perpetual and colossal impact of modern-day racism and spiritual discrimination. Thematic results were conceptualized in accordance with the spiritual context of

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each participant who briefly described some of the major values, beliefs, and practices of their endorsed form of Traditional Indigenous Spirituality prior to describing ISM experiences.

The following subsections delineate and describe relevant superordinate themes and subthemes pertaining to ISM which were commonly and frequently endorsed by Indigenous participants. The results of this study yielded a total of 7 superordinate themes which will be operationally defined and discussed in-depth below. Associated sub-themes are also listed, defined, and recounted within each superordinate categorical theme section to provide a comprehensive understanding of frequently and commonly endorsed aspects of ISM. Relevant conjectures related to the study are also briefly reviewed in summation to delineate important conceptual and theoretical findings related to the study.

Thematic descriptions are accompanied with meaningful quotes known as gems (Smith, 2011, as cited in Beck, 2021, Step 6. Looking for Patterns Across Cases, para. 2), to illustrate, in the words of Indigenous Peoples, the participants' subjective accounts of these ISM experiences, and their related impact. It is imperative that the perspectives of Indigenous mental health professionals and students who took part in this study be delineated to provide both an informed, personalized, and narrative approach to explaining contextually how these experiences occur, when they occur, and what needs to be done at a broader systemic and societal level to mitigate these microaggressive experiences. Most importantly, this research provides a space for Indigenous voices to be heard, and for their ISM experiences to be given due time, attention, and validation.

Superordinate Theme 1: ISM Microaggression Taxonomy Endorsement and Accouterments

Subthemes: *Microinsults; Microassaults; Microinvalidations, Macroassaults, and Lateral Microaggressions.*

Throughout the interviews, it became clear that Indigenous Peoples are subjected to a diverse array of microaggressive experiences. As such, ISM's, appear to be enacted in many forms and are inherently comprised of microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations, thus fitting within the microaggression taxonomy described by Sue et al. (2007). Additionally, some microaggressive experiences described seemed akin to precursors of macro-level discrimination and harassment which is also documented here. As such, it was apparent that some of the microaggressions experienced were a hint of something far worse looming thereafter in the form of progressively worse forms of discrimination. A significant subtheme that also emerged was that of a lateral microaggression, which is not included in the Sue et al. (2007) taxonomy, wherein microaggressions would be perpetrated by individuals who had similar ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. Subtheme results will be described in depth below.

Microinsults.

ISM Microinsults represents a relevant subtheme in this section which consisted of those experiences where Indigenous Peoples were exposed to inappropriate jokes, requests, and demonstrations of Indigenous Cultural and Spiritual ignorance, in addition to misguided attempts to bond with the target, or satiate spiritual curiosity. As such, some microinsults included those where individuals would ignorantly dress up as Indigenous Peoples, wearing Indigenous cultural and spiritual regalia including tribal blankets, with fake headdresses, amidst other contemporary clothing while pretending to engage in Indigenous dancing. Another microinsult included using

Indigenous ululation calls and inappropriate phrases about powwows to initiate workplace

meetings. Meanwhile, other microinsults comprised of asking Indigenous Peoples to share their

spirit names, or to procure peyote for them, thus, assuming that they ascribe to these practices,

and moreover, that they would be willing to share these things on a whim if they did.

Moreover, ISM microinsults represented misguided attempts by supervisors to connect to

Indigenous supervisees by discussing Indigenous Spirituality inappropriately, in addition to

having peers treat the Indigenous Person as the equivalent to a stereotypical media trope of a

spiritual medicine man whose sole purpose is to subserviently mentor and aid Non-Indigenous

People spiritually. Microinsults also consisted of witnessing others make attempts to

voyeuristically engage in cultural appropriation as Willow Creek recalls; "And you know it's

weird in one sense because like, you're seeing people who are not Indigenous or not Native, and

like they don't claim to be in any way, and so, but they're appropriating that because like, it's

kind of like trendy." This cultural appropriation and voyeurism also extended into the use of

Indigenous ceremonies and practices for the benefit of Non-Indigenous others by using

Indigenous Peoples and ceremonies as a form of entertainment, or as a means to satiate their own

curiosity as Two-Rivers notes; "…they called me up and they wanted me to, ah, pour a sweat so

they could see what it would be like…"

Additionally, microinsults also encompassed being questioned and effectively given

pushback from superiors when wanting to attend significant cultural/spiritual events such as the

Standing Rock protest. While yet another example of microinsult comprised of disrespectful

comments made about burning sweetgrass and sage, using oils, and traditional medicines.

Moreover, this category included microinsults wherein Indigenous Peoples were assumed to be

extinct and no longer around, which for some, led to being gawked and stared at. As such, the

subtheme of ISM Microinsults held within it a large number of varied microaggressions which actively conveyed insensitivity and rudeness, ultimately leading to demeaning the racial heritage and identity of participants (Sue et al., 2007).

Microassaults.

ISM Microassaults mainly comprised of those which were intentionally or consciously perpetrated. ISM microassaults sometimes seemed to occur overtly in the presence of Indigenous Peoples, and sometimes while Non-Indigenous Peoples were not aware that there were Indigenous Peoples present. These ISM's represented spiritual and cultural discrimination, acting to effectively exclude or overtly denigrate Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Spiritual Practices. One of these instances noted by Two-Rivers represented an account wherein a Traditional Indigenous student was referred to a mental health training program when the faculty replied; "Well, we don't know if we're ready for that kind of Indian yet." Other such instances include those where a manager of a University store on campus openly touted the endorsement of a banned racialized school mascot despite the NCAA banning it, thus reinforcing and praising non-Indigenous students who continued to defy these rules despite the openly known history of how this has impacted Indigenous Peoples as a cultural and spiritual affront. ISM microassaults also consisted of those where Indigenous Peoples were accused of engaging in ceremonially-related mind-altering substance use, devil worship, and practices with sexualized connotations, such as dancing "naked under the moonlight" as Kleegos6 recalled. Free Bird describes one of these such incidents happening in an all too common manner; "… I heard some coworkers, saying that Native Americans worship the devil, and like these, you know, all these ceremonies are like dark and evil and all this."

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Moreover, some Indigenous Peoples were explicitly told by Christian-Based religious officials that their ancestors and elders were not, as Flying By put it, "good enough" and were taught their people had been "cursed" as Free Bird explained, due to spiritually losing their way. This rhetoric also continued with the ISM notion that Indigenous People who do not attend Christian church would be eternally damned in hell. Other participants described perpetrators attempting to effectively silence them, in a manner echoing of blood puritanism, thus attacking their mixed-race heritage when they attempted to speak up for Indigenous Peoples, as Thunder described; "'What do you know?'", "'Who are you to speak for them?'" As such, microassaults took place in a number of forms and were primarily used by Non-Indigenous Peoples to openly and intentionally denigrate and exclude Indigenous Peoples and Spirituality with an err of superiority apparently rooted in privileged identity statuses on the part of the perpetrator.

Microinvalidations.

ISM Microinvalidations primarily consisted of events which invalidated the phenomenological lived experiences and spiritual importance of Indigenous Peoples. For instance, this subtheme included events where perpetrators refrained from taking responsibility for enacting microaggressions by defensively suggesting that it was the target who was being "too sensitive," or who was being a "snowflake" as Free Bird described. These microaggressions communicated to the target that perpetrators were ultimately unwilling to accept their fallibility and were accompanied by assertions of benevolent racism. For instance, perpetrator's microinvalidations asserted that their actions were meant to "honor" the culture as Free-Bird noted, or were indications that they were "*interested* in the culture" as Willow Creek described.

ISM microinvalidations also included instances where Indigenous Spirituality was excluded from systems of education and health, such as not including Indigenous Spirituality on

demographic intake forms, and not including content about Indigenous People or spirituality within academic training programs. Furthermore, these microinvalidations included instances wherein Indigenous Spiritual ceremonies, practices, and traditions were not given the same respect as those of other world religions, thus systematically creating environments, policies, and workplace regulations and norms to invalidate and exclude Indigenous Spirituality. This included disallowing Indigenous Peoples to smudge within office spaces for the benefit of themselves and/or their clients due to neglected environmental needs, and subsequently reporting them for engaging in these actions for assumed drug use. This also included requiring Indigenous Peoples to take personal leave instead of holiday leave to attend Traditional Indigenous Spiritual ceremonies while enforcing a Christian holiday schedule within an employment setting as Two-Rivers describes; "I always worked like the ---*type of holiday*---…Because so many people wanted to be with family and that kind of thing, and so, for me, I didn't mind doing the covering at that time, um, but I asked if I could swap that out and have *my holiday* be on *my*, you know, when *my ceremonies* took place. And; No. That wasn't possible."

Macroassaults.

Another finding included that within the domain of what would best be described as related macroassaults which often appeared subsequent to microaggressive experiences, and in some cases prior to them. For instance, many Indigenous participants overtly described job losses and workplace discrimination, including feeling forced out of occupational positions. As such, for some, seemingly innocuous microaggressions represented the tip of an iceberg of contempt and discrimination targeted at them. This included participants being denied promotion and/or tenure as Kina explained; "…you know, not making tenure because you're a Person of Color, when all the- you know, people, um, all the *White males* get promoted. I mean, yeah,

that's- …-I just, hear that, over and over and over again." This sort of workplace discrimination also included having personal rights violated in workplace settings, as Bulls-Eye_53 described in an internal thought process during one such instance; "…here comes a violation of my, ah, personal rights.'" Macroassaults also appeared to be enacted when participants were effectively forced out of communities due to a lack of acceptance of their lifeways and heritage, as well as instances of being overtly and immediately forced to leave the premises of a business with threats of police being called despite not engaging in any wrongdoing. Macroassaults also included those where participants were spiritually abused in childhood, either throughout the course of boarding school or in seminary, as Bulls-Eye_53 also explained; "…I usually got picked on by the nuns…" Bulls-Eye_53 elaborated how this pattern has continued throughout life since those early days in boarding school; "…and it's still a continuous bullying, and, um, (*inaudible*) a lot of microaggressions said towards me."

Lateral Microaggressions.

One significant finding of the study not encapsulated within the Sue et al. (2007) microaggression taxonomy was that which can best be described as *lateral microaggressions*. A lateral microaggression can henceforth be described as a microaggression which is enacted by perpetrators whose identities are similar to, or which closely align with the intended target, but whom may ultimately have at least one dissimilar identity status which is privileged, or which the perpetrator believes to be superior to the identity of the target, thus allowing an interpersonal space for a microaggression to be incurred. Perpetrators may therefore enact lateral microaggressions for a number of reasons including but perhaps not limited to the following; a) internalized oppression, b) peer bonding and empowerment; wherein culturally appropriate humor is used to poke fun towards other Indigenous Peoples, amongst safe others, or c) due to

differences in intersecting identity statuses which have divergent power and privilege, such as when an Indigenous Person with Christian Privilege microaggresses against Indigenous Peoples who practice Traditional Indigenous Spirituality. Lateral microaggressions are therefore microaggressive instances which transpired both within and between groups simultaneously, at the intersection of identity statuses, where people with similar ethnic, racial, and cultural identities would microaggress targets who typically had at least one dissimilar status which they did not also identify with. As such, Indigenous Peoples were likely to inflict microaggressions upon other Indigenous Peoples when their multiple intersecting identities carried with them even slightly more inherent power and privilege, or perceived privilege and status, thereby contributing to in-group/out-group dynamics which were microaggressive in nature. Within the context of this study, this meant that Indigenous participants received microaggressions from others with backgrounds which were closely aligned, if not almost completely similar to their own in a number of ways.

For instance, one type of lateral microaggression appeared to transpire when Indigenous People who practice Traditional Indigenous Spirituality incurred microaggressions from Indigenous People who endorsed privileged religious identities, such as Christianity. For example, Kina explained; "…our backgrounds are very closely matched, and yet, and so there's so much about us that is very similar, and yet, there are- there's this divergence that is very different." Kina further elaborated; "…it's her prerogative to live her life in the way she wants; as it is mine. But, she feels like she needs to constantly save me, and bring me into her fold…" Kina further noted; "…she- ah, is trying to save me and tryin to teach me, and- and I don't want to be taught." As such, in this example an Indigenous Person with a similar background but different spiritual/religious identity, appears to imply that the Traditional Spiritual ways of

another Indigenous Person are somehow lacking, causing a desire and subsequent attempts to correct this path, and effectively 'save' this person.

Lateral microaggressions also appeared to manifest in the form of microaggressions being perpetrated by Indigenous Peoples who identified with a tribe or nation which the target was not directly affiliated with. While many Indigenous People from various tribes and nations actively support one another and have good will towards one another, this type of lateral microaggression suggested that this may not be the case for all individuals. As such, people who shared an Indigenous racial/ethnic background effectively rejected other Indigenous Peoples and their spiritual identity/lifeways as being inferior to that of their own spiritual ways and their own people. As such, Kleegos6 described the crux of these sorts of microaggressions with a series of implied inquiries from perpetrators; "Are you *our* nation? Are you *our* spiritual practice? Are you *enough*? You know? Are you spiritual *enough*? Or- or, you know, is your way valid, and our way is better? You know, some of those spiritual in-fighting..." As such, it appeared that some Indigenous Peoples acted in ways which were unsupportive and exclusionary towards those who were not from the same tribe. It also appeared that these sorts of events could be conceived of as quite harmful overall, as Bulls-Eye_53 similarly described; "…*we're our worst enemy. Native People are our worst enemy."*

Another type of lateral microaggression that seemed to emerge from the data included sentiments that were based in pseudo-hostility as a means of bonding and empowerment amongst peers via taking back microaggressive statements. Overall, it appeared that these microaggressions were not said with malevolent intent or through a lack of awareness, but instead, were communicated intentionally knowing that there were no immense interpersonal power differentials contributing to the interaction which would make the statement feel

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aggressive or harmful. As such, these lateral microaggressions seemed embedded with Native

Humor which appeared to be used to poke fun at microaggressive instances and perpetrators who

do genuinely intend harm or lack awareness. In these cases, it appeared that the parties involved

were quite aware that microaggressive sentiments could be said amongst one another in a safe in-

group level space, but were well aware that out-group members hearing or using these

microaggressive statements could ultimately become harmful, as Thunder described; "… I feel

like- especially if it's like Native to Native, we usually, I don't know, you just joke around

differently. But, typically, in graduate school, we're like; 'Okay, don't say that around our *White*

colleagues.' …Because we don't want them to think that that's okay to say…" As such, some

instances of microaggressions enacted at a lateral level, appear to have had the inverse impact of

creating an opportunity for bonding amongst group members, nevertheless, there is a keen

awareness that if others with privileged identity statuses or power were to convey these same

messages, the connotation and weight of the delivery of the microaggression would effectively

change.

Superordinate Theme 2: ISM Perpetrator Characteristics and Responses

Subthemes: *Everyone Perpetrates; ISM Intention Matters; Why Perpetrators Perpetrate; Perpetrator Shame Reactions and Defensiveness; Perpetrators: Mostly White, Middle Aged, Men in Power*

A relevant superordinate theme that emerged from the data included that wherein the

participants described the perpetrators of the microaggression and their associated characteristics

and identity statuses. Moreover, participants described a potential rationale for what they

believed caused the microaggression to be enacted. As such, it appeared that throughout the

process of experiencing ISM, targets attempt to delineate the nature and intention behind the

microaggressions. In some cases, while the purpose and intention of the microaggression was

evident, in others, it seemed that the target was left ruminating for some time afterwards, and may still be unsure of what led to the ISM event. Indigenous Peoples also seemed to take stock of who commonly engaged in ISM experiences, and how they reacted in these instances as well which will be described below. A total of 5 subthemes are listed and described below.

Everyone Perpetrates.

The first noted subtheme conveys the notion that everyone perpetrates. Throughout the interviews it became abundantly clear that ISM's were being enacted by conceivably almost everyone that targets had contact with. For instance, this could range from strangers on the street to first-degree relatives, and everyone else in between. As such, loved ones, family, friends, and peers were the perpetrators of microaggressions, in addition to having these encounters amongst workplace employers, colleagues, supervisors, faculty, and organizational leaders. Moreover, these instances occurred with clients, as well as acquaintances, and complete strangers off the street. As such, this subtheme embodied that everyone perpetrates microaggressions, including the participants themselves, and in one unfortunate occurrence, even this primary investigator, who used a colloquial microaggressive phrase without realizing the historical connotations behind it until it was already spoken. As such, it seems that no one is immune from engaging in microaggressions, as these are apparently a phenomenon that we all collectively perpetrate, whether we are consciously aware of it or not. As Kina explains; "…it would take a great deal of introspection to figure out, what the hell, am I doing, or- you know, cause, I never mean to hurt or offend, or anything like that, but yet that's how I was coming off. And, then I, you know, finally figured it out. But again, my own microaggressions that I was committing- …-with my lack of- of awareness and understanding." As such, it appears that everyone perpetrates microaggressions, and to deny this is fundamentally missing the point.

ISM Intention Matters.

The second subtheme represented the idea that ISM intention matters: as participants described those perpetrators who were enacting ISM due to positive intent, ignorance, and how the microaggression could be accompanied with sensitive delivery. Participants described how it was important for them to ascertain the intention behind the microaggression delivery, and in some cases this was even noted as a recommendation for others who experience these events, as Kina expounded; "…try and figure out, is it coming from just a place of sheer ignorance and inexperience? Or is it coming from a root of malice and- and- and racism and bias towards you? Um, and depending on *which*, then- then I would say, then, you know, you- just like you don't know everything, you need to work to help them to understand, you know, who you are, and what you're about. If- if- they're worth it to you, and if they're not, then walk away." In some cases, it seemed obvious that this intention was malicious in nature, while at other times, it was clear that the perpetrator was someone who lacked education and awareness, thus enacting microaggressions out of a state of sheer ignorance in the most literal sense, completely absent of malintent. For instance, Kleegos6 illuminated the following after describing seeing a man dressed with an Indigenous tribal blanket and a fake headdress; "…that is a person that had *no idea* about *any of this* not being appropriate. And so, um, there's still a lot of education that needs to happen in the general public as well." While even those microaggressions enacted via ignorance and a lack of awareness were ultimately still negatively impactful, it seemed that targets were taking stock of the intention behind these incidents in addition to the delivery of them. For instance, Kleegos6 likewise described two instances of being asked to engage in drumming which were approached in divergent ways; "…the other time that I was asked to do it as well it was a little more appropriate in the way that they said it. They actually said; You know

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I don't know if this is appropriate or not, but could you do some drumming with some people? And then I explained it. But that- that time was more humble." "… those were two different experiences about the same thing that was approached totally differently." As such, it appears that targets are keen to take note of both the delivery and intention of the ISM experience, and may choose how to respond thereafter based on these factors.

Why Perpetrators Perpetrate.

Another subtheme in this section related to participants providing information about their understanding and rationale for why perpetrators perpetrate. It therefore appeared that participants had greatly considered prospective reasons that people continue to enact microaggressions, including ISM. In some cases, these reasons appeared to be that the media is reinforcing these ideas and stereotypes. Meanwhile there are people in the public, including teachers, who are not used to working with Indigenous Populations, who may therefore be perpetrating due to a lack of exposure and experience with Indigenous Peoples, or a lack of Spiritual knowledge and understanding. For instance, Two-Rivers described an unwitting faculty member engaging in an ISM by stating the following; "…you know, if you really feel like you need a sweat, you can go in my office and turn the heat up." Two Rivers elaborated upon their own thoughts related to this event and noted; "…they can't give what they don't have." Thus, implying that there was an empathetic recognition on the part of the target, of the rationale for the enactment of the ISM on the part of the perpetrator. Other perpetrators were noted to engage in spiritual/cultural appropriation due to thinking that it was a cool and trendy fad, or because Indigenous practices were being depicted and viewed as a tourist attraction which targets took stock of.

Moreover, it was noted that mental health professionals may perpetrate microaggressions because they may not believe that Indigenous practices are valid. It was additionally noticed that people perpetrate because everyone has biases and no human is perfect or infallible. Furthermore, some perpetrators were viewed as continuing microaggression enactments due to closed-mindedness, indicative of being set in one's habitual ways and stagnantly continuing to do things the way that they have always been done as Thunder put it; "…most of them are set in their ways." As such, some perpetrators were explained to continue to perpetrate because they are defensive and not open or receptive to learning, despite needing multicultural competence training. Moreover, it was noted that there often are no consequences for perpetrating aside from possibly being called out, and even then, perpetrators may choose to be defensive as opposed to being receptive to these instances. When it came to lateral microaggressions, the reasons for perpetrating varied based on the type of lateral microaggression occurring, with some being due to joking intentions, while others were due to religious conviction and beliefs which lacked empathetic understanding. Some lateral microaggressions appeared in part due to internalized oppression as Kleegos6 eloquently described; "…some of this oppression we've taken on as our own ways, and we turn around and do it to other people, that internalized oppression."

Perpetrator Shame Reactions and Defensiveness.

Yet another subtheme in this section represented perpetrator shame reactions and defensiveness. This subtheme comprised of descriptions wherein perpetrators were commonly described as being defensive and engaging in shame-reactions akin to White-fragility, particularly when being called out on microaggressions. For instance, Free Bird described a scenario where they called out a microassault amongst co-workers; "I was like (*scoffs*); "The devil is a Christian concept (*laughing*), like you guys don't know what you're talking about."

And he was like; "You don't know what you're talking about!" And like, going off on me, and because I'm light-skinned, I think, they didn't realize they were talking to a Native person." As such, in some cases, this ultimately resulted in arguments, and widespread disagreements, and in other cases, this resulted in an egoic delusion of self-righteousness wherein the Non-Indigenous Person believed and tried to convince others that they were not racist or discriminatory. Willow Creek effectively described this sort of defensiveness from perpetrators; "…I think people, are kind of terrified of like, the "R" word, you know, and like anything involving racism, or like discrimination, or anything. Like, people hate having it implied that, you know, that's something that they're engaging in…" Willow Creek further elaborated; "I think people tend to react with like, you know; 'Oh well they didn't mean it that way.' Um; 'You're being too sensitive.' Um; 'You're looking into it too much.'" As such, it appears that at times, calling out perpetrators led to further microaggressions in the form of microinvalidations. Thankfully, this did not always seem to be the case, and it seemed evident that some perpetrators may demonstrate a willingness to learn and correct their actions, while a great number appear quite defensive and unapologetic.

Perpetrators: Mostly White, Middle Aged, Men in Power.

Another subtheme in this category centered around the idea that perpetrators may be mostly likely to hold the privileged identities of being White, middle aged, men in power. For instance, Thunder authentically recounted the following using Native Humor when describing the context of the ISM experiences, including where they occurred; "… a faculty meeting-… -on a majority White university campus, um, in a staff meeting room-… -with lots of other faculty, um. Or, you know, at a ---mental health organization--- in a staff meeting room (*laughing tone*)-… -majority White faculty. (*Both chuckle.*) …I see a theme happening here." While there certainly are White men in power who are likely great allies and proponents of social justice, it

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became clear that people who hold a number of privileged identities and subsequent status, may well have the luxury of not having to consider their actions, or grow their awareness, as Flying By explained; "…these ---*people*--- were so easily willing to- to, say, you know, racist things, and seeing how casual the racism was. Um, it- yeah, just, you know, kind of put me on edge. And I- I think in ways, that ah, you know, had I been a White Person, who, was raised with ah, you know, all the privileges that come with that, you know, ah, these things wouldn't have been anything, you know."

It also appeared that White men in power were able to engage in these microaggressions largely due to being in a position of authority and security, which minority group members who lack status and power seem unlikely to threaten. As Flying By aptly described; "You know, I think maybe he might have tried to mitigate any kind of backlash that might have happened and maybe when he saw that, you know, it wasn't going to go any further than a (*coughs*) social media post, and he was like; 'forgot about it.'" As such, given that there do not appear to be any consequences for microaggressions, aside from possibly being called out, men in power may feel relatively secure enacting them, knowing that their status and security ultimately will not be questioned as a result. Thus, societally conveying that these instances are acceptable and that people with these identity statuses do not have to hold themselves accountable for their actions or make any attempt to apologize or change.

Moreover, having systems layered with White men in power seemed to cause a hierarchy of inaction after microaggressions, which also prompted minority group members to experience a lack of power within the institution. For instance, Flying By described an inability as a professional to do anything following an ISM incurred upon the Indigenous prisoners by White men: "…there was no recourse for me to do anything about it, you know. Um, what was there for

me to do? Like go tell their- their White supervisor?" As such, Flying By described the sort of dynamic of stagnation and reinforcement of the status quo which is created when minority group members inherently have a lack of power within these institutions, where not only leadership, but other staff members predominantly identify as White; "I think probably ninety to ninety-five percent of the people with power in there are- are White males. Um, and so yeah, you know, ah, yeah it's kind of made me- made me think about my- my- the- my- the- my *place* in power and stuff inside of a- that kind of a setting." Flying By elaborated further; "…kind of like I was mentioning, um, didn't feel like I was just like a- just a staff person there, it felt like I was a staff Person of Color in there. Um, and so, you know, it definitely f- feels like, ah, it set me apart, in ah, in not the best way." As such, it becomes clear that when there is a lack of diversity institutionally, and layers upon layers of institutional hierarchies are filled with White males in the positions, minority group members ultimately lack power, and microaggressions continue to be enacted without opportunity for recourse.

It also appeared that even when White males seemed to have good intentions of getting to know Indigenous Peoples and supervisees, their approach and attempt to connecting was one which was at times presumptive, and reductive in nature, based on what they believe the Indigenous Person might connect with, as opposed to finding that genuine connection; as Free Bird described; "Yeah, I had a supervisor one time who was a White male, and brought up, um, a *vision quest* that he went on (*chuckling tone*). And I, like, I think he thought I would relate to this idea somehow. I have no idea who took him on this, if they were actually Native, what it actually was, it sounded *weird* to me." Unfortunately, this experience with male supervisors, and other ISM experiences with male faculty members seemed to be prevalent within this sample as Kleegos6 also described the following; "…it just kept- kept making it worse by him focusing on

me solely as a spiritual being and not as a person, um, in this training experience becoming a counselor." However, it did appear that if supervisors took time to ask questions as opposed to assuming, this seemed to help. For instance, Thunder described processing a microaggression experience which occurred in a client session with a supervisor thereafter to gain social support; "… they're *White*, but typically they *understand*, like, I'll say it, and they'll be like; 'Tell me what came up for you.'" As such, White People in power can act as a source of support to Indigenous supervisees, particularly when they engage with them using an open, receptive, and non-assuming interpersonal style.

Superordinate Theme 3: ISM Responses

Subthemes: *Calling Out; Avoidance Escape; Reframing, Fawning, and Joking*; *Hypervigilance; Freezing and Learned Helplessness; Self-Belief: Standing Firm*; *There are No Consequences*

This superordinate theme represents the typical microaggression responses which were employed by Indigenous participants after the microaggression occurred. A total of 7 subtheme categories are present within this Superordinate theme and are listed chronologically below.

Calling Out.

This first subtheme within this superordinate theme section represents a willingness to call out the microaggression, speak up about it, and also engage in subsequent teaching as needed to educate perpetrators on the concern. This confrontation represented one which was direct in nature, and depending on the situation, happened even in the presence of blatantly unequal power dynamics, such as when supervisees/students called out microaggressions being incurred by faculty and supervisors. For instance, Thunder described an instance where calling out a faculty member went well; "So I guess it changed our relationship for the better, when I called it out. Um, if I didn't call it out it probably would have changed (*both chuckle softly*) our

relationship for the worse *(laughing tone)*. Cause I probably would have had, you know, this picture I would have painted of him and kept *that*." While it appears that sometimes calling out can be met with a kind and open response which allows perpetrators to grow in their awareness, it also appears that calling out can cause argumentative or defensive reactions which may result in further microaggressions being enacted. Flying By described an incident where calling out occurred due to the sheer anger it caused in the moment; "…*anger* just arose in me really quickly. And, normally, I'm pretty reserved and stuff. And yeah, usually don't speak up about stuff. But, I don't know, I just, kind of impulsively, was like, well, you know, this guy's like; "Oh that's great." And it was right after, I was like, you know; "I- I don't think it's great." I told him, I thought 'it's pretty racist.' Um, and- and ah, you know the cash- you could tell the cashier and the person who was the manager got pretty uncomfortable, um. You know, faces turned red; that kind of stuff. And the guy just smiled at me and said; "Yeah." Like, you know, that was his only response."

Avoidance Escape.

The next subtheme in this category represents avoidance, escape, and leaving wherein the target responded by avoiding the perpetrator after the event, physically leaving the environment in which it occurred, or alternatively, escaping from them by leaving the organization altogether, or, when this was not possible, mentally checking out of the situation via the use of interpersonal withdrawal and disengagement. For instance, Kleegos6 described one such instance; "…he came back and offered me the job, and I said; Um, I need to think about it. And I got up and I walked out. And, um, after talking with my ---partner---, I went, I called them up and I said; you know, I can't work for you if somebody is going to treat me that way…" Free Bird also described their response to ISM perpetrators; "…saying no to spending as much time around somebody that said

those things, or, you know, slowly responding less to their attempts to make contact with me."
As such, it is clear that ISM experiences can cause Indigenous Peoples to avoid places, people, and organizations as needed to protect themselves from further harms, and that others who do feel welcome and feel valued have the privilege of living their lives without having to withdraw and isolate the way that minority group members are effectively forced to at times.

Reframing, Fawning, and Joking.

Another relevant subtheme in this category represents that of reframing the situation, fawning, or joking. This subtheme comprises of reactions to ISM and discrimination wherein the Indigenous Person actively attempted to take the high road, so to speak, within the experience, thus refusing to sink down to the level of the perpetrator. At times, this included going with the flow of the situation just to get by and reduce tension by making light of it in the moment as Kleegos6 explained; "…I just kind of went along with it to try to just um reduce the tension, try to make a joke of it, make light of it, and move along." At other times, it included patiently listening to the comments of the perpetrator while smiling both externally and internally, knowing that the perpetrator was fundamentally wrong in their understanding. As such, some participants appeared to either externally reframe the situation, or internally reframe their position on the situation to survive those moments. As Bulls-Eye_53 noted; "…and when they were doing that, I was happy to be home, happy to be helping out with the suicide problem, and I was *smiling*, maybe that *encouraged them* to be *meaner*."

Hypervigilance.

The next subtheme explicitly comments on how Indigenous Peoples attended to the microaggression experience, and describes how their internal awareness of the situation suddenly changed thereafter. This can be effectively identified as hypervigilance, and represents when Indigenous Peoples would suddenly have a heightened or changed awareness of the immediate environment in which the ISM occurred, which also led some to make internal preparations due to the expectation that more microaggressions would soon transpire. Thunder effectively describes these internal responses; "I guess it changes my experience because of my awareness in the room, and I try to think like; 'Do all these people agree with that?' Um; 'Would all of these people *say that*?' Um, so I guess it, I guess it just alters my experience by my awareness level." As such, it appears that after an ISM experience, targets may suddenly experience increased hypervigilance and awareness in the moment, keenly taking in details and context of the situation, while actively attempting to protect themselves from further enactments of harm by anticipating that another affront may yet again occur, perhaps cuing them into the unsafe environment they are in, and the danger that accompanies it.

Freezing and Learned Helplessness.

The next subtheme in this section primarily describes how some targets engage in a freezing response, whereby they either do not know how to respond to the ISM and discrimination, or altogether lack a response. In some cases, this could also be equated with learned helplessness, knowing that choosing a response of any sort would not go unpunished. For instance, Bulls-Eye_53 noted the following; "…my career would've been destroyed if I re-retaliated." It also appears that targets may actively consider if responding is worth their time and energy, and make a calculated decision from there as how to best respond as Thunder elucidated;

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"And I think it's more of like, how much energy do *I* want to spend on this, and how much

energy is that person going to suck *out of me*.' In some cases, it also appeared that a lack of

immediate response was due to intense feelings of shock, and in some cases, targets were left in

a situation where calling out the microaggression was not possible, such as while having one

enacted in a public meeting where they are not the primary speaker. In these cases, it appeared

that experiencing the ISM caused the target to not be able to feel present in the moment, and

caused rumination about the event, sometimes causing them to question if others who the

perpetrator was affiliated with also endorsed those same sentiments.

Self-Belief: Standing Firm.

The next subtheme is one which describes the importance of having self-belief and

standing firm in one's convictions as a response. This subtheme detailed instances where

Indigenous Peoples would engage in internal reactance to the ISM experience through the use of

internally validating to themselves that they are correct in their worldview, and becoming even

more deeply rooted in it as a result. For instance, Thunder remarked; "…sometimes it almost

feels liberating (*chuckling tone*), when someone micro-aggresses your spirituality to like dive

into it deeper. Like, this is *me,* like; 'yeah, you're putting me down, or you're putting my people

down, or whatever' but that makes me even want to do it even more to (*laughing tone;*

chuckling), like, get back at you." As such, Indigenous Peoples may respond to ISM by engaging

even more so with their Indigenous Spirituality, and by enacting in a process of self-validation

after an ISM affront.

There are No Consequences.

The last subtheme in this area, and perhaps one of the most concerning, is the theme

suggesting that there are no consequences for microaggressions or discrimination. As such, it

became clear that unless microaggressions are called out, there are no repercussions for the perpetrators. Systems in society have effectively been created for White People, by White People and therefore a status quo is inherently embedded within them, and within related power structures, which does not provide a regulatory system for ongoing forms of modern discrimination. As such, when a microaggression or other act of discrimination occurs, the Person of Color, in this case, an Indigenous Person, has no where to turn institutionally to report their concerns, and if they do, they fully expect to be met with additional microinvalidations, or worse yet, having their occupational or educational position threatened as a result of reporting such instances. Kina described the ongoing nature of workplace discrimination, and hazing within internships and described the following; "And then what? So they want their names. Well, they need to, you know, file a- a- a grievance, or whatever. And, yeah, what? Give my name so that I get fired too. You know what I'm saying? Ah, because why? The people in power, are those people that I just described-… -instead of the ones who are really there to make change, and- and to help things." Moreover, Kina exemplified this notion further; "…what began as microaggressions, um, the more they got to know me, ah, you know, the more it intensified, and the greater their fear became of me until they finally, um, they- they colluded and *lied*, *unethically*, and- to get me *fired*." Therefore, perpetrators are effectively allowed to continue engaging in microaggressions and other forms of discrimination because their status, power, and occupation are not at risk because other White People will collude to support them, even if this includes blatant unethical lying and false justifications. Moreover, minority group members who complain or who speak out will in turn have their reputation damaged as Bulls-Eye_53 so aptly put it; "The- they call me the trouble-maker, but I'm calling- calling straight- straight up shots on them." As such, there are no consequences for microaggressions within these institutions despite

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so many of them openly affirming and purporting that they are committed to social justice in their mission statements. Given that this is not even regulated within institutions, there are certainly no consequences within the general public.

Superordinate Theme 4: Impact of ISM on Indigenous Peoples

Subthemes: *Emotional Impact; Reactions to Voyeurism and Cultural Appropriation; ISM's are Pervasive and Casual; ISM's Occur at a High Frequency throughout Life; Impact on Welfare and Livelihood; Negative Relationship Changes; Devaluing the Perpetrator; Additional Burdens*

The next Superordinate theme comprises of descriptions of the impact that ISM had on the lives of the Indigenous participants of the study. In some cases, these experiences caused intense emotions, negative relationship changes, and impacts to livelihood. These ISM experiences also caused additional burdens to targets, and left some feeling culturally and spiritually appropriated, and as though they were a source of entertainment. Other relevant impacts include Indigenous targets finding themselves devaluing the perpetrator. Another quite salient impact is best described as the sheer frequency with which these microaggressions occur, and how casual they are in the lives of Indigenous Peoples.

Emotional Impact.

The first subtheme to be discussed is that of emotional impacts; this included the negative internal emotions and personal impacts that ISM had in the lives of participants. For instance, targets felt a number of intense internal emotions such as sadness, anger, hate, contempt, distress, and offense, in addition to feeling unwelcome, hurt, and in pain. Furthermore, targets felt disrespected, alone, anxious, stressed, and different, as Willow Creek explained; "…I felt anxious, you know, I was worried, about like, what was going to happen next, and if it was going to like come back up, or, you know, um. And then I felt kind of like alone. Felt pretty like, different, which, I'm sure like a lot of Native People are, you know, familiar with that feeling

whenever you have to kind of walk in two worlds and stuff, but um. Yeah, so it made me feel

different, um, made me feel pretty stressed." As such, it was clear that targets were left with a

whole host of emotions following the ISM experiences that they were then left to process and

navigate, as Free Bird noted; "That was such a weird thing to say to me, and it made me just feel

ashamed and stereotyped, and like angry." Meanwhile, the perpetrator had the privilege of

moving forward with their lives without a second thought, and with a complete lack of

awareness, lack of empathy, or lack of concern for how they impacted others.

Reactions to Voyeurism and Cultural Appropriation.

Another subtheme which emerged included the reactions to voyeurism and cultural

appropriation that targets were experiencing. It appeared that pervasive microaggression

enactments came in the manner of treating Indigenous Spirituality as a form of entertainment,

wherein Non-Indigenous Peoples believed they could take it on as their own simply because they

requested to do so, or felt entitled to learn. For instance, Willow Creek noted the following; "…it

felt like, a *novelty*, I guess, or like something that people do as like an attraction, on like, you

know, um, a road trip or like whenever you're traveling, and so kind of a touristy thing. Which

was weird." As such, Indigenous Spirituality was effectively treated like a commodity, and those

who practice it were viewed as a service provider. As Two Rivers aptly described; "…my belief

system is that if somebody offers you tobacco, and you accept it, that you're- you're agreeing to

respond to them. And so I would have people come in my office and offer me tobacco, and they

would put it on my desk, but I wouldn't accept it because I had- just had a *feeling* that they were

going to ask me to do something I wasn't, um, given the right to do, or something I wasn't

comfortable with." As such, the impact of ISM includes that wherein targets feel culturally

appropriated, and in some cases, as though others are merely engaging with them to satiate their

own curiosity, or in order to procure a service for their own benefit, as opposed to having a genuine belief in these important spiritual practices, traditions, and ceremonies.

ISM's are Pervasive and Casual.

The next subtheme is that of the notion that ISM's appear to be pervasive and casual. For instance, microaggressions enacted by perpetrators did not appear to be even remotely thought of as a concern on the part of the perpetrator. It appeared that they engaged in the ISM so bluntly and so willingly that it was baffling and concerning to the target to behold. In some cases, targets would look around the room wondering if others had heard the same thing as them, and in other cases it seemed that there was an air of sheer lightness with which these jokes, statements, and actions were delivered. For instance, Flying By explained the impact these ISM's had due to their casual nature; "Um, kind of later on when I was dealing with these things internally, ah, you know, a lot of um, helplessness, um, knowing that, you know, this kind of, you know, these microaggressions were so *casual* to them- just *nothing* to them." As such, in some cases targets learned that their environments and those they were around were not safe, and that in fact, perpetrators around them would likely continue to engage in these microaggressions in a way that is both pervasive and casual, thus causing an expectation that oppression would effectively continue to occur.

ISM's Occur at a High Frequency throughout Life.

A relevant subtheme also consisted of the idea that these microaggressions occur at a high frequency throughout the vast duration, if not the entirety, of the lives of Indigenous Peoples. As such, microaggressions may be heard from childhood onward, moving continuously and unrelentingly forward into old age as Bulls-Eye_53 described explaining to another; "…people have been throwing rocks at me all my life.'" For others, these events may have begun

to commence once they were an adult working amongst White populations. Moreover, these events occurred so recurrently wherein Indigenous People would just happen upon them unexpectedly in their lives as Flying By illustrated; "…it's been happening my entire adulthood. Um, in different- different domains, you know, um. And this isn't stuff that like, I- I set out to go looking for stuff, you know. This is stuff that I just walk into, you know. Um, and so just as a Native Person living my life, you know, like, ah, this stuff is like thrust upon us."

Impact on Welfare and Livelihood.

It appears that microaggressive experiences may be casually and frequently enacted by perpetrators, while Indigenous targets are left navigating the impacts of them. As such, microaggressions caused severe impacts in the life and livelihood of targets which was another subtheme that emerged. Many targets were negatively impacted by subsequent job loss, job resignation, job transfer, or even lack of desiring to even obtain a job post-interview, as a result of discriminatory experiences which ultimately began as microaggressive incidents. As Kleegos6 described; "… it was a lot more damaging, um, in a different way, um, because it effected my ability to continue working there, or to even get the job for that one…" Ultimately, it appears that in some cases, microaggressions represent a much more concerning truth that the Indigenous Person is not welcome, and can expect further discrimination and microaggressions to occur from those organizations and perpetrators.

Negative Relationship Changes.

The next subtheme consists of negative relationship changes. As such, this subtheme comprised of instances wherein targets felt their relationships changed for the worse following microaggression experiences. In some cases, it appeared that ISM promoted distance and withdrawal within relationships, and led some to feel as though others fundamentally lacked an

understanding of who they were, ultimately causing some to question the quality of the relationship; as Kina illustrated; "I wouldn't say that I have a strained relationship with her, but, she does not understand *me*, in the way that I can understand her. So, there's a stand-off-ishness between us, and there- there is a distance, that I have *allowed* to- to grow-". ISM experiences also led some to question the relationship as Willow Creek described; "… I thought we cared about each other and had respect for each other and everything, but it's like, okay, you're not taking something seriously that like I really do." Moreover, in some cases relationships were very negatively impacted as Free Bird revealed; "Well, the co-workers, I *hated* them after that. I mean I just didn't- I didn't interact- interact with them much, but I hated them." While in some cases, relationships were very actively and intentionally not pursued as Flying by noted; "I don't know if it so much *changed* my relationships with these ---*people*---, but I think it *prevented*, um, me being willing to- ah, to *build* a relationship with them."

Devaluing the Perpetrator.

Another relevant subtheme in this area is an impact wherein targets started to legitimately question the competence, knowledge, and quality of perpetrators of ISM, and their related training programs. As such, targets would devalue the perpetrator of the microaggression in some cases, by affirming to themselves that this person's sentiments or actions were uninformed, lacking in awareness, and/or intelligence as Free Bird explained; "… I think I coped by telling myself that they were idiots (*chuckles*) and they didn't know anything about what they were talking about." This subtheme also included extrapolating those sentiments onto others that the perpetrator was closely affiliated with, or the program/organization that they represented. In the case where leaders and people of power perpetrated microaggressions, it was noted that they appeared to be representative of their whole organization, which effectively led some targets to

have concerns about the entire program and how they educate their staff/faculty; as Thunder noted; "I try *not* to do this, but I know I have sometimes, but if, something happens, like, you know, a *director* says something, I tend to, ah, stereotype the whole program…" Free Bird similarly noted; "It made me feel like my grad program maybe, um, *doesn't do* a really great job of preparing their faculty to work with Indigenous students." As such, it seems that when perpetrators enact ISM, they are impacting targets, target's perceptions of them, and the target's perspective of those they are affiliated with, thus causing an interconnected ripple effect as a result of their actions.

Additional Burdens.

A subtheme which emerged that appeared inherently cogent, was that targets experienced additional burdens that others with privileged identities did not. This included taking extra time to manage microaggressive reactions, using extra energy, thought, and consideration to determine if and how microaggressions should be addressed, and having to engage in coping skills after the microaggression enactment. Moreover, there were instances that the rationale for the microaggression was not explained or obvious, which left some ruminating or wondering about the situation long after it had transpired. Furthermore, when there were no consequences for the events, this left targets to manage these instances on their own, and feeling as though they continued to carry these with them, as Flying By illuminated; "…you know, that's frustrating, is that these people can put this kind of stuff out there and effect Native People in this way, and, ah, you know, there's nothing can be done about it. It's just us, we have to carry that stuff with us for- for the rest our lives. You know. I'm probably going to remember these things for the rest of my life."

Superordinate Theme 5: ISM Coping

Subthemes: *Traditional Spiritual Coping; Social Support; Native Humor; and Self-Preservation.*

This superordinate theme can be operationally defined as comprising of the coping skills that Indigenous Participants implemented following the enactment of an ISM, microaggression, or other subsequent act of discrimination. Within this theme, several subthemes were found, including: Traditional Spiritual Coping, Social Support, Native Humor, and Self-Preservation.

Traditional Spiritual Coping.

The subtheme of Traditional Spiritual Coping primarily explains how Indigenous Peoples may gain comfort and strength, and how they may further ground themselves in Traditional Indigenous Spiritual beliefs and practices after incurring a microaggression. This appeared to be a highly endorsed coping skill which allowed Indigenous participants to reaffirm their traditional roots in the face of the ISM experience, and gain the accompanying spiritual grounding that they required to effectively manage these experiences. For some, this included the use of traditional medicines, as well as the use of prayer, consultation with elders, and engaging in traditional ceremonies and practices such as drumming, and singing. The implementation of spirituality itself as a means of coping elucidated the vast importance of spirituality within the lives of Indigenous Participants. These sentiments may aptly be described by Bulls-Eye_53 who strongly purported the significance of instituting spiritual coping frequently to help manage experiences of discrimination; "No matter what it is always pray. And *always* know there's a greater lesson."

Social Support.

Another subtheme within this superordinate Coping category is Social Support. This subtheme can be further defined as the social and emotional support sought and gathered by Indigenous targets following ISM and microaggressive experiences. In particular, participants

described the importance of finding people who are safe to talk to about these concerns, who they can discuss these instances with in an authentic manner, who will validate their experience, and not perpetuate microinvalidations as a result of this sharing. This concept was also extended to finding safe spaces, including being around other Indigenous Peoples from the same tribe, or different tribes who likely have experienced similar sorts of ISM experiences, and who would therefore be unlikely to perpetrate these microaggressions themselves. Furthermore, finding other POC to relate to who also have similar experiences was also described, as such, indicating that social support can come from many sources, but ultimately, it seemed that the essence of social support is finding others who can relate to the experience in some way and validate them, thus providing a safe space for the target to describe the incident and resulting impacts. Kina described how they had gained social support; "…over the years, ah, I have found like-minded people to be my inner circle if you will. And- who I lean on for comfort and support in-in-in difficult times."

Native Humor.

Another subtheme found within the superordinate theme of coping was that of Native Humor. This was not a topic that was overtly identified by Indigenous Participants; however, it became abundantly clear throughout the interview process that this phenomenon was present and serving the function of helping participants to effectively use culturally appropriate humor to manage negative emotion and distress in the moment. As such, humor was used not only while describing emotionally difficult situations and while recalling painful ISM experiences, but it was also used to create an air of lightness after describing intense emotions such as anger. Native humor was also effectively used to poke fun at perpetrators who appeared shockingly misguided and misinformed about Indigenous Spirituality, as Kleegos6 demonstrated; "…(*laughs*)- it's

appalling, and I'm laughing, because it's so appalling. But- but-and I'm laughing because it's so ridiculous." Native Humor also seemed to be used when perpetrators overtly acted in hypocritical ways, that did not logically make sense, which was often enacted in a sarcastic way. Native Humor was also instituted in a self-effacing manner, such that participants would poke fun at themselves, or recall instances where fellow Indigenous Peoples lovingly made jokes at their expense in order to provide a humble grounding as to directly oppose and defuse any statement which could even remotely be conceived of as arrogance or egoic self-advertising. As such, it appeared that Native Humor served a function of helping participants cope not only throughout the context of the interview while discussing vulnerable and intense emotions, but also as a means to self-validate when perpetrators were clearly uninformed or hypocritical, in addition to using it in a self-effacing manner to hold true to cultural values of humility.

Self-Preservation.

Self-preservation was yet another coping subtheme which manifested from the research data. Within the context of this study, self-preservation primarily consisted of strategies that the participant had come up with to effectively keep themselves safe after the incurrence of an ISM or other discriminatory experience. In some cases, this meant withdrawing to protect oneself physically, emotionally, or psychologically, and in other cases, this meant closely guarding traditional spiritual practices and ways to mitigate the risk of cultural appropriation and spiritual exploitation as Two Rivers described; "…you pick and choose how much you're going to disclose, as, I'm not there to educate them or provide them entertainment." This also included setting interpersonal boundaries with others as needed to keep others at an interpersonal distance.

Superordinate Theme 6: ISM Mitigation

Subthemes: *Allyship, Perpetrator Change, Barriers to ISM Mitigation.*

The superordinate theme of ISM Mitigation encapsulates ideas and suggestions that participants had about what they believe can be done to mitigate not only the frequency and severity of ISM, but also broader microaggressions. Relevant subthemes in this category include the following: Allyship, Perpetrator Change, and Barriers to ISM Mitigation.

Allyship.

The theme of Allyship primarily spoke to the idea that Non-Indigenous allies are needed in order to make lasting and effective change. The rationale for this seemed to be that the responsibility of calling out ISM and other microaggressions cannot fall squarely and solely upon those who are being perpetrated against. Doing so, would cause exorbitant amounts of time and energy on the part of Indigenous Peoples who carry the burden of having to emotionally and psychologically manage these experiences when they are occurring, let alone having the additional vigor to constantly call out these instances when they occur. It was noted that Indigenous Participants believed that they should also be allies to other People of Color, and that there is a social responsibility for others to likewise call out Indigenous microaggressions and ISM when they occur, thus advocating for social reciprocity in these matters. It was further noted that all microaggression should be called out. While there was an acknowledgement that this might not be possible or desired on the part of the target, allies should be present to do so in an effort to enact social justice and social advocacy. As Free Bird described; "… I think we also hold that same responsibility toward other People of Color, you know, but. I would like them to also hold that responsibility for us, and I would like White allies to hold that responsibility for all of us too."

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Perpetrator Change.

The subtheme of Perpetrator Change effectively encapsulated ideas which called attention to the fact that it truly is the perpetrator who needs to be open, receptive, invested in, and committed to change. This inherently makes sense because it is the perpetrators of ISM and microaggressions who are perpetuating these instances of ignorance, and/or malevolence towards fellow human beings. Their blatant lack of awareness or disregard for the emotional wellbeing of others is impugned with a disconcerting lack of empathy and lack of knowledge. Furthermore, it was highlighted that ultimately, it should be the responsibility of these perpetrators to take it upon themselves to become educated on these topics. As such, when multicultural education is offered to them through trainings or otherwise, it is their duty to be open and receptive to these teachings, which unfortunately was not always the case. In some rare instances, it was clear that perpetrators were willing to acknowledge their lack of awareness about the ISM, were clearly able to learn from this instance, prevent further enactments of it, and were even able to enhance the relationship amongst themselves and the person they had incidentally targeted.

Ultimately, it appears that perpetrators need to take it upon themselves to enact introspective awareness to gain some semblance of understanding of what they are interpersonally enacting when they engage in these ISM's and microaggressions. It unfortunately became abundantly clear from participant responses that many perpetrators are fervently committed to retaining an unapologetic internal image of righteousness, and are therefore unwilling to admit human imperfection and fallibility. As such, those who hold onto this image will continue to be incapable of recognizing the need to change in order to become more compassionate people; as Flying By described; "…these people need training on how, just to be better humans; how to relate to other people, especially People of Color."

Barriers to ISM Mitigation.

Accordingly, a subtheme that emerged from the data is one of mitigation barriers. This subtheme depicted the image of ISM and microaggressions not being taken seriously by mental health professionals as well as others who perpetrate them. This meant that ISM was effectively viewed as an "ancillary concern" by many people, as Free Bird so eloquently put it. In essence, this means that in order for true change to occur, mental health professionals who are committed to social justice should point out these instances when they occur, and also ensure that they themselves are not perpetuating these instances unknowingly, or far worse, intentionally. Free Bird further explained the responsibility that mental health professionals have; "… we have a greater responsibility than other people do, to understand the harm that that does to people. And as a field we have a greater responsibility to address our behavior here." Free Bird further elaborated; "…I think we need to set the bar *higher* for ourselves as a profession." Kina similarly described the importance of having leaders in power who genuinely walked the talk of diversity by noting the following: "…you have to have, people- people who will champion, truly champion diversity, and, um, and the right for people to *be* diverse. Um, who are in the positions of power and leadership. And I think frankly, that's *not* necessarily the case. People will play lip service to plenty of stuff but they don't really live it." As such, it appears that while many purport to care about diversity, these words may ultimately be hollow, thus representing a phantom image of concern without authentic evidence of action to demonstrate such statements.

Mitigation barriers also included people, in general, not taking responsibility for the microaggressions that themselves or others were engaging in, and in fact, offering microinvalidations in the place of personal responsibility. For instance, Free Bird explained how people absolved themselves and others from taking accountability for their actions including

some common phrases Indigenous Peoples and other targets may be familiar with hearing;

"…focus on the *intention*, they didn't *intend* to hurt you, they meant to *honor* you, they meant to-you know, show interest in you." Like no." As such, this defensive rhetoric has become an overused excuse for people with privilege not to change.

Superordinate Theme 7: Research Interview Reactions

Subthemes*: Getting the Word Out and Spreading Awareness; Indigenous Peoples Helping an Indigenous Researcher.*

This superordinate theme can be operationally defined as participant reactions to the interview and the interview process, wherein they offered their emotional response to interview content, and described their hopes for the research outcomes. Subthemes in this category include the following: Getting the Word Out and Spreading Awareness, and Indigenous Peoples Helping an Indigenous Researcher.

Getting the Word Out and Spreading Awareness.

The sub-theme of Getting the Word Out and Spreading Awareness consisted of participants sharing their positive responses to the research, and expressing their desire to help contribute meaningfully to the study in the hopes that information obtained from it could ultimately contribute to raising awareness about ISM experiences. A quote by Kleegos6 describes such hopes for the research; "…getting this out there more will help other psychologists and other service providers to understand this is still going on and to share that with non-Indigenous people so that they're able to help ah, better um, service their Indigenous clients and non-Indigenous, and to call it out as not okay when it's happening." This subtheme also included largely positive reactions to the research topic and process, including feeling happy and hopeful as a result of engaging in the interview process, for instance Kina noted the

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following: "…I'm happy to share, and um, and I'm just hopeful that by sharing, um, my *own perspective* that it will help to contribute to that larger notion that everyone has different perspectives-… -and they- they're entitled to it."

Indigenous Peoples Helping an Indigenous Researcher.

The subtheme of *Indigenous Peoples Helping an Indigenous Researcher* was endorsed when participants implied and expressed a desire to help a fellow Indigenous Researcher complete research endeavors, thus suggesting a desire to support the efforts of fellow Indigenous mental health students/professionals with a spirit of good will and collective effort. This suggests that Indigenous mental health professionals and students may have an authentic interest in supporting the research endeavors of other Indigenous Peoples, and wishing them well in their future. For instance, Bulls-Eye_53 noted: "I've had those experiences so, if I can help you champion *that*, that's great." As such, it appears that Indigenous Peoples are well-aware of the harms that ISM and other forms of modern discrimination continue to cause, and that they are more than willing to support the efforts of others who are attempting to make a difference in this area.

Conclusion

A total of 7 superordinate themes were elucidated as a result of this Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, with a number of subsequent subthemes within. As such, it appears that ISM is a phenomenon that incurs an immense impact upon the lives of Indigenous Peoples, and is clearly something which is being enacted frequently, and in a variety of ways. These ISM experiences primarily fit the microaggression taxonomy created by Sue et al. (2007), but the subtheme of Lateral Microaggressions suggests that this taxonomy may need to be expanded to include intragroup microaggressions which are perpetrated by individuals with similar ethnic,

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racial, and cultural backgrounds as the target. These results demonstrate that more research needs to be conducted to not only explore microaggressive experiences, but to mitigate the frequency and severity of microaggressions. Furthermore, it appears that institutions and systems need to do their part to recognize their role in these interactions, as many of these organizations knowingly or unwittingly engage in the perpetuation of a system that is fundamentally flawed at its core, and fundamentally biased towards White People, amongst others with privileged identities.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Several research questions were created and described in Chapter II, Section II to delineate exploratory areas of inquiry pertaining to the topic of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions. This chapter summarizes and describes relevant findings from the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis within the context of these research questions. Information is included to substantiate the existence and describe the contextual nature of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions, including the impact that this phenomenon has on Indigenous People and Indigenous livelihood. Additional topic content areas and thematic outcomes are outlined in relation to implications for theoretical paradigms, clinical practice and professional training, as well as social justice advocacy and policy amendments.

Outcomes of Research Inquiries

Several research questions were posited which will now be discussed in detail below in the hopes of explaining and contextualizing relevant research findings.

Research Outcome, Question 1

Research question 1 centered around discovering what types of spiritual microaggressions occur amongst Indigenous populations, and the extent to which these ISM's fit the Sue et al. (2007) microaggression taxonomy. Results indicated that, by and large, Sue et al.'s microaggression taxonomy can be readily applied and instituted for the purposes of categorically sorting the microaggressions Indigenous Peoples experience aimed at Traditional Spirituality. As

such, the outcomes from the study suggest that microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations were a salient part of the ISM experiences of Indigenous Peoples. One significant phenomenon wherein the conceptual extrapolation did not map to Sue et al.'s taxonomy was the novel subtheme of Lateral Microaggressions. Lateral microaggressions appear to be those that effectively are being instigated by perpetrators who hold the same or similar racial, ethnic, or cultural identity as the intended target, thereby suggesting intragroup perpetrations of microaggressions due to differences, or perceived differences, in privileged identity statuses. The novel findings related to lateral microaggressions will be discussed in greater depth when considering the theoretical implications of this study, whereas examples of microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations experienced by the participants will be detailed below to demonstrate the extent to which they fit within the Sue et al. microaggression taxonomy and the extent to which the outcomes of this study are supported elsewhere in the literature.

Examples of microinsults that fit the Sue et al. (2007) taxonomy included voyeuristic ploys to culturally appropriate Indigenous Spirituality for the benefit of non-Indigenous others, such as those described by Clark et al. (2014) who described the theme of unconstrained voyeurism. Dressing as Indigenous Peoples, wearing sports regalia with Indigenous mascot warriors, or using traditional ululation battle cries or phrases about powwows to initiate meetings are also microinsults. Other examples included joking about Spiritual practices such as sweats, by reducing this to the mere act of perspiration which aptly fits with Harwood et al. (2012) who described how microaggressive jokes effectively act to highlight the outsider status of minority group members. Another example includes making assumptions about Indigenous Spirituality in a misguided attempt to generate a connection. Perpetrators were largely unaware of the harms

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being incurred by these spiritual microinsults (Sue et al., 2007). As such, calling out these instances often led to perpetrator education, whereas in some instances, this was not possible or desired, as the microinsult appeared intentional.

Examples of microassaults that fit the Sue et al. (2007) microaggression taxonomy include primarily the voicing of conscious overt spiritual/cultural discrimination by the perpetrator when they believed they were in the company of other White People, or when they felt they had the power or influence to safely disclose their prejudice without recourse. This includes excluding those who practice Traditional Indigenous Spirituality from academic program consideration, asserting that Indigenous lifeways and ancestors were not good enough, and overtly degrading traditional practices as being associated with illicit, mind-altering, and/or sexualized behaviors. Moreover, people in leadership positions enthusiastically endorsing the continued use of banned racialized mascots despite knowing the adverse history, discord, and emotional harm this has incurred, which is also supported as a microassault in Clark et al. (2011) within the theme of waging stereotype attack. Microassaults were compounded by suggesting Indigenous Peoples calling out microaggressions do not have a legitimate Indigenous voice due to their mixed-race status; overtly calling to colonial racial derogation intentionally meant to hush the voices of Indigenous Peoples denying their ancestral heritage to delegitimize them or palliate their social discourse. Hamill (2003) describes how ongoing battles of Indigenous legitimacy continue to define "Indianness" (p.268) where some believe that blood quantum has been used to keep Indigenous people apart. As such, the silencing of mixed-race Indigenous People may be one more means of mitigating the solidarity of Indigenous Peoples supporting one another.

ISM Microinvalidations also fit the microaggression taxonomy created by Sue et al. (2007). Indigenous Peoples were subjected to verbal comments and interpersonal gestures which minimized their phenomenological experience of racial, cultural, and spiritual discrimination, in addition to invalidating their spiritual heritage, well-being, and lifeways. Examples included being met with defensive or ignorant assertions that an ISM was meant to 'honor' them, or to demonstrate curiosity and interest, thus defensively hiding behind a shield of self-righteousness and beneficent spiritual discrimination. These notions of honoring the culture were similar to those described by Chaney et al. (2011) and Sue (2010b), thus suggesting these sentiments are a well-recorded phenomenon. Non-Indigenous others thus engage in a process of moral self-preservation, effectively absolving themselves from any responsibility in the matter, and self-deludingly rationalizing the harms incurred upon the target. As such, targets expect that help will not be provided if they discuss ISM with others in power, as they would be met with apathy or victim blaming sentiments suggesting they are the problem, thus risking job security. Microinvalidations transpired within workplace organizations, wherein Indigenous Peoples were required to use personal leave to attend their holidays despite working over Christian holidays which are ethnocentrically embedded into the system as allotted days off. This represents systematic oppression which is overtly discriminatory in nature and invalidates the spiritual views of everyone who does not identify as Christian. Schlosser (2003) suggests that one of many Christian privileges includes that Christian-identified People do not have to work on their significant holidays, thus implying that people of other spiritual and religious identifications will not be afforded the same privilege. This imposition also takes the form of not allowing culturally appropriate practices, such as smudging in office spaces, and leaving Indigenous Spirituality off of medical intake forms as a spiritual/religious option, effectively forcing Indigenous Peoples to

select the option of "none" despite its inaccuracy. As such, those in power turn a blind eye to those with whom they do not identify, thus demonstrating their racism, lack of awareness, and apathy.

Research Outcome, Question 2

The second research question primarily centered on investigating how ISMs impact Indigenous Peoples, including what feelings and consequences arise from ISM experiences, how Indigenous Peoples respond to ISM, and how Indigenous Peoples cope with ISM. Each response below represents an important aspect of detailing the phenomenological experience of Indigenous Peoples who endure these microaggressions all too often.

Overall, subthemes within the present research demonstrated that ISM's impact Indigenous Peoples in a variety of ways, including causing negative emotions, negative relationship changes, and negatively impacting their welfare and livelihood. Moreover, it was found that ISMs caused Indigenous Peoples to feel as though perpetrators were engaging in voyeurism and that their spirituality was being culturally appropriated as a form of entertainment. This subtheme was similar to a theme found in Clark et al. (2014) which suggests that Aboriginal students at a Canadian university were also subject to the microaggressive theme of enduring unconstrained voyeurism. Moreover, it was evident that ISMs were both pervasive and casually delivered by perpetrators, and that they occur at a high frequency throughout the lives of Indigenous Peoples. This sentiment was supported by Sue (2010b) who suggested that People of Color are frequently reminded of their inferior status in all aspects of society including employment, and media. Moreover, these experiences caused additional burdens in the lives of Indigenous participants, and in some cases, led them to devalue the perpetrator and question the institutions and organizations in which they trained and worked.

Indigenous Peoples were found to respond to ISM in a variety of ways including calling out microaggressions, engaging in avoidance or escape, reframing situations, and engaging in fawning behaviors or joking to reduce tension. Moreover, subthemes were also found to suggest that some Indigenous participants responded to ISMs with hypervigilance, freezing, and feeling a sense of learned helplessness, while some responded by grounding themselves in their self-belief and standing firm in their convictions and spirituality. A subtheme also depicted that ultimately, there are often no consequences for microaggressions whatsoever. Some of the participant responses to ISM found in this study support research by Sue et al. (2019) who discussed and documented microinterventions. In particular, Sue et al. (2019) documented the response wherein targets retreat or remain passive, which seems akin to the subtheme of avoidance escape, while the Sue et al. (2019) theme of educating the perpetrator was described under the subtheme of calling out within this study. Moreover, the theme of calling out supports research by Hernández et al. (2010) which similarly delineated the theme of confrontation which also included educating the perpetrator.

This research also yielded significant outcomes in the exploration of ISM coping mechanisms. Several coping subthemes suggest that the most commonly used coping mechanisms include utilization of Traditional Spirituality, obtaining social support, implementing the use of Native Humor, and engaging in self-preservation. The use of Traditional Spirituality following microaggression experiences supports work by Hernández et al. (2010) who similarly found that spirituality is a coping strategy utilized by professionals following racial microaggression incidents. Moreover, the theme of seeking support was also supported by Hernández et al. who similarly found that professionals and clinicians cope with microaggressions by seeking the support of colleagues, friends, and family. Moreover,

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Hernández et al. suggested that documenting microaggressions at work was another means to manage these experiences, which fit in line with the theme of self-preservation within this study. The theme of Native Humor is also supported by Garrett et al. (2005) who suggested that Native Humor is a spiritual tradition which acts as a coping skill which also preserves connection and acts as a means of ensuring that people do not become overly consumed in their problems or within themselves.

Research Outcome, Question 3

The third research question primarily centered on elucidating how ISMs and other microaggressions can be mitigated in frequency and severity. A number of participant suggestions that emerged from the research may act to both prevent microaggressions from occurring, and manage them after being enacted. As such, ideas for decreasing the frequency and severity of microaggressions will be described below.

The subthemes of allyship and perpetrator change speak to the primary ways in which participants believed that microaggressions could be mitigated. The subtheme of allyship primarily centered on the idea that allies are needed to support the voices of People of Color to effectively call out microaggressions when they occur. This subtheme is supported by research on microinterventions by Sue et al. (2019) which suggested that allies can play a role in educating offenders by expressing their experience of the microaggression in the moment. Moreover, Fish et al. (2020) also described how Indigenous People and People of Color may engage in allyship through the use of civic engagement, protests, social media, as well as individual initiatives, therefore suggesting that ally identities may also be political in nature and may enact change on a number of levels.

Another subtheme to mitigate microaggression frequency and severity included perpetrator change. This primarily consisted of the need for perpetrators to be open and receptive to multicultural trainings, as well as gaining exposure with, and empathy for, minority group populations. This subtheme effectively places responsibility on the perpetrators to learn, grow, and change, thus effectively targeting the root of the problem, instead of those who are experiencing the repercussions of the problem. This intervention and mitigation approach is akin to the Mentors in Violence Prevention program described by Katz (2018) which specifically targets men for prevention efforts related to gender violence. As such, the approach Katz (2018) describes effectively targets bystanders by focusing on the context of social change where everyone has a role in changing normative behaviors by challenging them, exposing them, and intervening in them. As such, participants within this study, similarly identified that change needs to occur amongst those who are perpetrating these events.

Participants in this study also elucidated that some of the barriers to microaggression mitigation include that perpetrators may not be open to change, or multicultural trainings, and that institutions are fundamentally flawed, and therefore, minority group members within them lack support. Support for the idea that perpetrators may not be open to change is elucidated in Jayakumar and Adamian (2017) via the concept of White fragility which they describe as manifesting amongst White students who report feeling a sense of victimization when race becomes salient within conversations, and "epistemological viewpoints that decentered whiteness" (p. 914). As such, White fragility may play a role in perpetrators not being open or receptive to multicultural trainings, therefore, White fragility may need to be recurrently addressed to ensure that White People effectively move past this to accept responsibility for their role in racial oppression. The notion that the system is fundamentally flawed and therefore

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contributes to microaggression perpetration is also supported by Blair (2008) who noted how color-blindness is a feature within schools and local authorities which is enacted daily, thus endorsing institutionalized racism. As such, this supports the idea that in order for change to occur, current systems including universities, academic training programs, and mental health organizations amongst all other conceivable institutions will need to be effectively analyzed, and reconsolidated to decenter White perspectives (Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017).

Implications

The following subsections will delineate the implications of this study, including relevant theoretical implications, clinical implications, and recommendations for policy change. Relevant implications will be described and discussed in-depth.

Theoretical Implications

ISMs are a palpable phenomenon which should be theoretically integrated into contemporary literature documenting microaggressions at the intersection of race and religion/spirituality. The present research supports and is supported by Clark et al. (2014) who described a microaggressive account wherein a professor made fun of Indigenous Peoples on a stormy day while degrading ceremonial rain dances, thus suggesting that microaggressions directly targeting Indigenous culture and spirituality are salient within the lives of Indigenous Peoples and may be theoretically documented within others sources of literature without being overtly labelled as such. As such, ISM represents a phenomenon which requires increased exploration, consideration, and integration amongst microaggression theoretical paradigms.

Results from this study also suggest that the Sue et al. (2007) microaggression taxonomy should be expanded to incorporate the phenomenon of lateral microaggressions found within this study. A lateral microaggression represents a microaggression which is being enacted by people

whose identities closely align or appear similar to that of the intended target. As such, lateral microaggression perpetrators may be other Indigenous Peoples from other tribes or nations, the same tribe, and even the same family.

Lateral microaggressions may be enacted on the basis of differing intersecting identities, some which carry more power and privilege than those of the target. For instance, an Indigenous Person who endorsed Christianity, may well have a privileged identity in contrast and comparison to an Indigenous Person who endorses Traditional Indigenous Spirituality, which has long been the subject of Christian derision, fear, and eradication. Moreover, lateral spiritual microaggressions appeared to be perpetrated by members of another tribe that questioned the legitimacy of other Indigenous Peoples and their spiritual life-ways, thus implying a sense of superiority or in-group/out-group rhetoric which caused Indigenous People to not feel welcome or accepted amongst them. Despite a great majority of Indigenous Peoples openly welcoming one another and supporting diverse nations and tribes, it appears that in some cases individuals may hold internalized oppression which reveals itself through an interpersonal discourse of rejecting members of various tribes and questioning their spiritual, ancestral, and cultural legitimacy. In these cases, Indigenous Peoples who endorse one type of Indigenous Spirituality may not accept the Traditional Indigenous Spirituality of fellow Indigenous Peoples who may not be from their same nation, tribe, or band, ultimately resulting in the covert rejection of these people, their family members, and their spiritual practices. This phenomenon highlights the vast differences amongst tribes, and suggests that some individuals may knowingly or unknowingly enact views and beliefs which imply that their Spiritual or cultural way is somehow better or superior than that of others, which ultimately is rejected.

Furthermore, lateral microaggressions took place in a way representative of pseudo-hostility joking which were not serious gestures enacted to cause harm, but were clearly a means of bonding and connecting with fellow Indigenous Peoples via the use of Native Humor. In many ways these ISM's did not appear to feel aggressive to the target, so long as they were being enacted in a relatively safe space, amongst other Indigenous Peoples. This sort of joking may represent a form of empowerment or taking back oppressive ideals and concepts thrust upon Indigenous Peoples to make light of genuine enactments of microaggressions that are heard in everyday life. In these cases, it appeared significant that Indigenous Peoples not allow non-Indigenous others to hear them using these phrases, for fear that the use of these phrases amongst others will cause harm to the targets due to inherent power differences.

As such, it is clear that microaggressions, and in particular, ISM, which is enacted at a lateral level can be due to power differentials, or perceived power differentials, within and amongst Indigenous Peoples, and ultimately a microaggressive statement can lose impact and even promote bonding amongst fellow Indigenous Peoples when there is an implicit agreement that both kind intentionality, and a lack of power differentials, are being instituted together to collectively take back power from an external aggressor.

The phenomenon of lateral microaggressions may be supported by Castillo (2009) who reported that Latino students in college experience intragroup marginalization including perceived rejection from other students who share their same heritage and culture. More specifically, Castillo et al. (2007) described Intragroup Marginalization as interpersonal distancing when an individual is believed to be exhibiting values, beliefs, and behaviors which are considered to be distinctive from the group's typical cultural norms. As such, this concept seems somewhat akin to the phenomenon of lateral microaggressions, thus suggesting that

exclusion can be perpetrated by members of one's own cultural group. Moreover, support can be found for the concept of lateral microaggressions in Bailey et al. (2011) who studied internalized racial oppression amongst Black People. Bailey et al. defined internalized racial oppression as the process wherein Black People effectively accept and internalize negative stereotypes, racist doctrines, hatred, discrimination, and a falsification of historical facts amongst White supremacist ideology. As such, it appears that internalized oppression is a palpable phenomenon that may well extend into microaggressive forms which are experienced daily, thus causing the experience of lateral microaggressions. This concept is also similar in nature to work by Liu et al. (2019) who suggested that People of Color may inadvertently learn via the process of acculturation, how to effectively become "unthreatening and racially innocuous (p. 1) to White People. According to Liu et al. this process allows the Person of Color to accommodate to the emotions, needs, and status of White People, thereby protecting them from experiencing the distress that accompanies White fragility. As such, this internalized oppression may be manifested via the mechanism of lateral microaggressions, which are covertly infused within daily interactions to reinforce the status quo of White supremacy (Senter & Ling, 2017). In the case of ISM, these lateral microaggressions also appear to reinforce Christian superiority and dominance, and what could conceivably relate to a theme of Christian-Fragility.

Overall, whereas the taxonomy created by Sue et al. (2007) principally seems to be of great use and utilization when categorizing ISM experiences, a phenomenon emerged from the study's data which can aptly be identified as lateral microaggressions. Lateral microaggressions represent a new way of describing microaggressions which carry different interpersonal weights and impacts based on intentionality, purpose/function, delivery, outcome, and status/power/ privilege of intersecting identities and affiliations. As such, the Sue et al. microaggression

taxonomy could and should conceivably be expanded to include lateral microaggressions, which may well have their own subtype groups associated within them.

Clinical and Training Implications

Clinicians should be aware that ISMs are a palpable phenomenon which exist, and which their clients and/or supervisees and colleagues may experience. As such, clinicians should be aware of the psychological and emotional harm enacted against Indigenous Peoples when ISMs take place, and how these experiences impact important domains of functioning. Furthermore, clinicians should be aware that Indigenous Peoples may have responses to ISMs that appear similar in nature to trauma responses, including fight (calling out), flight (avoidance/escape), freeze (no response), or fawning (reframing, smiling, being kind, and giving the benefit of the doubt). The responses of fight, flight, and freeze are noted by Maack and Young (2015) to be fear-based responses that act to promote avoidance and defense as motivational states for survival. Walker (2013) also described fight, flight, freeze, and fawn as being responses to complex trauma, where fawning is a response to trauma which is codependent in nature. A fawning response is also described by Walker as one where the target may attempt to please the perpetrator or be helpful to them in order to delay an attack. As such, this suggests that clinicians should be aware that Indigenous Peoples who experience ISM may experience fear-based responses in the moment, which seem similar in nature to trauma responses meant to keep the target safe. Furthermore, it appeared that there was a sense of heightened vigilance within the environment once a microaggression was enacted, causing the Indigenous Person to experientially be on guard for further ISMs which could transpire, and also causing them to look around to see if others had noticed or observed the affront. In some cases, this severely disrupted the attention, concentration, and ability to be present in the moment for the target. As such, it

was clear that ISM responses were causing reactions that appeared to be well in line with that of trauma responses from an observational standpoint, as such, clients who describe these experiences may benefit from conversations which explore and validate their experiences of discrimination including ISM.

Clinicians should also be aware that ISMs may impact cognitive and intrapersonal functioning, which often go unaddressed by others as an unjust residue left for the target to metaphorically clean up or manage on their own. As such, clients may feel offended, hurt, sad, angry, hostile, disrespected, attacked, misrepresented, depressed, and filled with hate after these experiences. Some may feel distressed, helpless, agitated, disgusted, and contemptuous, and feel as though their identity and reality are not being taken seriously. ISMs also caused Indigenous Peoples to feel shut down, stressed, anxious, worried, invalidated, dehumanized, uncomfortable, weird, alone, unwelcome, traumatized, different, and reminded of their lack of power in institutional settings. As such, clinicians should be prepared to accept and validate a diverse array of emotional responses to ISMs and provide a safe space to discuss these instances.

Clinicians should also be aware that non-Indigenous perpetrators may fail to give a second thought to the harm that they have incurred upon targets following an ISM, while Indigenous Peoples are left with the mental and emotional burden of carrying on their own the consequences of the microaggression. In some cases, this may also take time away from work or school due to having to manage the ISM. Targets may feel like they cannot escape from these situations which are thrust upon them in their daily lives which they are left thinking and ruminating about long after the events have transpired. Clinicians can therefore help Indigenous clients by discussing their coping mechanisms, recommending multiculturally appropriate coping mechanisms, and offering psychoeducation regarding microintervention responses. For instance,

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Indigenous participants were found to heavily endorse the use of traditional spiritual coping mechanisms to manage the after effects of ISMs, which included the use of prayer, support from elders, the use of traditional medicines, as well as traditional group practices. Moreover, participants were found to utilize social support, including locating safe people and supports; as such, clinicians may be able to suggest that Indigenous clients build up a safe social support system where they can vent and be validated by others. Finally, participants were found also to heavily endorse the use of Native Humor. This suggests that the Indigenous clients may benefit from surrounding themselves by other Indigenous Peoples who may have had similar experiences, and who can poke fun at the ridiculousness of these experiences and the fundamentally flawed and ignorant thought patterns evoked by perpetrators who unwittingly engaged in ISMs. Clinicians who also label ISM behaviors as shocking, obscene, and egocentrically rapacious on the part of the perpetrator, may also help clients manage these experiences by laughing at the folly and unknowingness of others. This may be an empowering process for Indigenous clients as it would both internally and interpersonally validate that the behavior, verbalizations, and sentiments of perpetrators are iniquitous, uninformed, or seriously misguided and mistaken. Overall, it may be particularly important to suggest to clients that there are no wrong ways to respond to ISM, and that all of their physiological and emotional responses are valid.

In summation, it is clear that both clinicians, and training programs should take it upon themselves to become knowledgeable about ISMs, and inform themselves about Indigenous related microaggressions for the benefit of their clients to safeguard the therapeutic alliance, and also to ensure a strong supervisee/supervisor relationship. Clinicians should be aware of ISMs so that they can validate these instances when they occur and provide a safe space for

clients/patients to discuss these concerns. Moreover, when clinicians notice non-Indigenous clients engaging in ISMs, they should actively take steps to call this out to educate them, as doing so may prevent future occurrences from transpiring, and also potentially benefit the relationships that clients have with Indigenous friends, family, partners, peers, and coworkers. Furthermore, clinicians would do well to check in with both Indigenous clients and Indigenous supervisees to explore their experiences of discrimination, particularly that of the intersection of race and spirituality as a means of better understanding their lived experiences. Training programs and faculty would also do well to be mindful of these instances, and educate themselves on examples of ISM, so that they can be mindful not to perpetuate them amongst colleagues, students, and advisees. Furthermore, clinicians and faculty should be made aware of the phenomenon of lateral microaggression so they can validate supervisees, students, and clients when these experiences also occur. This process of self-education may create a positive ripple effect, thus allowing clinicians and fellow faculty members to better identify when microaggressions occur, so that these can be effectively called out to enhance prevention.

Policy Change Recommendations

"Inside of me there are two dogs. One is mean and evil and the other is good and they fight each other all the time. When asked which one wins I answer, the one I feed the most." These words spoken by Sitting Bull (Good Reads, 2020) unequivocally describe the crux of the change enactment process which needs to take place in order to effectively mitigate microaggressive experiences. Through this metaphor, Sitting Bull has fundamentally described human nature, often at odds with itself, whereby there is an internal struggle amongst dichotomous forms of good and evil. This inherent state represents one which implies the sheer imperfection and fallibility which resides within us all. Both sides of human nature remain, and

will always be present, but ultimately, it is the individual choice of each and every one of us as to which side of our internal selves will prevail. As such, individuals who find it within themselves to feed the good dog will be able to enact positive change through growth, and consumptive learning, while those that feed the bad dog will stagnate the good, or worse yet, perpetuate evil in the world.

Some of the change recommendations included in this study therefore consist of spreading awareness about this topic, to ensure that the public, as well as mental health professionals and students, are aware of these microaggressive incidents. As such, this may decrease the frequency and severity of future microaggression occurrences, and may help people to become informed on the harm that these can do to the targets of these microaggressions, as well as the harm that can be enacted within their own personal and professional relationships resultantly.

Other change recommendations include providing trainings with specific appeals that those in attendance actually be open and receptive to the trainings. As such, this may require multi-day trainings, with prolonged participation, including role-plays where empathetic attunement can transpire by metaphorically putting people in the role of the target. This may also include helping professionals in the field, and employees at other workplace organizations, to learn more about Indigenous history and the context of modern-day racism in a workshop format which includes specific information about state-specific or location-specific tribes in the area. Moreover, accompanying change might include having policy enacted wherein multiple infractions related to microaggressions would lead to additional trainings being offered, not as a punishment, but as an opportunity for people to learn information and gain awareness that they appear to be lacking or not absorbing, comprehending, or enacting.

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One of the most salient themes related to change enactments included the notion of being better allies. As such, this implies that people need to have courage to speak up and call out microaggressions when they happen, and not merely leave it up to the Indigenous target, or Person of Color to do so themselves, as this can become quickly exhausting. It may be beneficial for mental health offices and training programs to create a culture where microaggressions are actively called out. This primary investigator often refers to this process as calling in, which in essence includes gently but directly pointing out a microaggression when it occurs in a kind and compassionate way, educating the perpetrator, and making them aware of the negative impact and harm this could have on their peers, loved ones, or clients, should they enact this microaggression with them in the future. This process also includes overtly commenting that it is the responsibility of the perpetrator to take it upon themselves to not only educate themselves to grow in their awareness, but also to commit to no longer enacting or repeating this. The notion of calling in is described by Ferguson (2015) as the process wherein calling out is enacted in a way that is integrated with more compassion and patience. Such an environment where calling in occurs would be likely to normalize that everyone has biases, makes mistakes, and can move forward from these mistakes by educating themselves and making an active commitment to crowd out the microaggressions by replacing them with enhanced knowledge, awareness, and skills in that area (Sue et al., 1992). Being a better ally also includes getting to know Indigenous People, gaining increased exposure with this population by taking active steps to spend time with Indigenous People, befriending them, and gaining empathy as a result. Empathy can also be gained by learning more about People of Color via other means of learning as well, however, it appears that many of the ISM's which were enacted were out of ignorance and lack of exposure to Indigenous Peoples, as such, this needs to be attended to.

Another suggestion for change enactment included having an office similar to Title IX where people can discuss microaggressions, how they were impacted by them, and see some kind of consequences as a result of them, particularly when they are being enacted by those in leadership positions, and when the microaggression is particularly intentional, malicious, and consciously enacted. Anonymous reporting of events may also be beneficial so that the job of the Indigenous Person is not put at risk as a result of reporting these things, and then subsequent action can be taken within the program or clinic to remediate these concerns with additional trainings offered to perpetrators or to the center as a whole. This might also include the implementation of world religion trainings and formal classes to help people learn about various forms of religion and spirituality, to gain awareness and empathy. Such courses already exist, and may be a valuable part of core training for counselors in the field.

Another change recommendation resulting from this study included the imperative fact that diverse leaders are needed to truly enact change. As Kina noted, leaders are needed in "positions of power and influence, and, until that changes, we're gonna have what we have; - chaos." As such, it would seem that within the mental health field, and within the larger world, those "who actually walk their talk" as Kina put it, will need to become the ones who are given power within systems. It became overwhelmingly clear that many of the perpetrators consisted of middle-aged, White men in power. While there are many people who hold these identity statuses who are allies to Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color, it is also likely that people with these identity statuses of privilege may lack awareness of the microaggressions they perpetuate. Many people with these inherently different life experiences, may not have felt compelled to learn about the experiences of people with minoritized identity statuses, or how they themselves may be unduly targeting them with microaggressions. Furthermore, some people with privileged

identity statuses may also choose not to engage in action to make change, as ultimately there will be no personal consequences if they do nothing. As such, it may be important to promote the leadership advances of diverse peoples, who are strongly committed to social justice, and change, as well as providing additional in-depth experiential training opportunities and workshops to people with privileged identity statuses on a frequent and recurring basis. Indigenous leaders in particular, appear to be needed, and should be given, as Free Bird put it, "a seat at the table," therefore suggesting that Indigenous Peoples should be given increased power and input into matters within the field, including within higher level organizations such as amongst regulating bodies, and also within training organizations. This includes increasing the amount of original works that are written by Indigenous authors as required readings within syllabi for courses, and also increasing the amount of time and focus spent on learning about Indigenous mental health topics in the field. This should effectively help to promote education and learning in this area, and to ensure that it is not only White psychology that is being taught, but that it is psychology that truly does educate students and future professionals about all people, including those with minority identity statuses.

Limitations and Future Directions

Some limitations of this research include that a relatively small sample was used. While Smith et al. (2009) suggest that as few as 3 participants is a sufficient amount for this type of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, sample sizes for Phenomenological Analyses have been commonly known to go as high as 12-15 participants. As such, whereas 8 participants represent a perfectly acceptable number of participants for a Phenomenological Analysis, this could have been extended upwards to as many as 12 participants to have a larger sample. Furthermore, it may have been beneficial to recruit from a larger pool of participants, thus including more

variety in tribal identification and status. Moreover, it may have been beneficial to engage in member checks post-data collection to request that participants review themes to see if they are congruent with their lived experience and subjective knowledge of ISM phenomena. Moreover, the research could have been designed in a way which allowed follow-up interviews to take place, which may have allowed participants added time to reflect on ISM experiences, and also report if new ISM's had taken place since the last interview.

Given the limitations of the study, it appears that subsequent research in this area is needed to substantiate not only the theoretical findings of the study, but also to better understand the clinical implications, and implications within training programs as well. As such, it is conceivable that each relevant section of the findings discussed could have been a study in and of itself. To fully elucidate the phenomenon of ISM, significantly more work will be needed, specifically to explore ISM within the context of clinical work, training programs, public spheres, and personal domains.

Moreover, quantitative work on this topic should also be enacted in the future in order to better understand the extent to which this phenomenon is present across the broader population of Indigenous Peoples, and not only amongst Indigenous mental health professionals. Given that this is also a preliminary descriptive exploratory study, this study could prospectively be repeated to determine which superordinate and subthemes surface amongst a new sample. One area of vast significance which should be explored in greater detail in the future, represents that of the phenomenon of lateral microaggressions. It may be beneficial to explore this topic in particular, to determine the extent to which this phenomenon takes place not only within Indigenous Populations, but also amongst other People of Color, other religious/spiritual affiliations and groups, as well as others who hold minority identity statuses. It may also be

beneficial to engage in future research in the area of microinterventions to determine the extent

to which microinterventions are utilized differently across various minority group members.

Concluding Statements

This study represents a seminal work in the field to elucidate the phenomenon of

Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions (ISM), which not only exist, but appear to primarily fit

within the microaggressive taxonomy created by Sue et al. (2007). This study also appears to

have uncovered and documented the phenomenon of lateral microaggressions, thus describing

what ultimately may become an important area of future research amongst many minority-

identified groups; doing so in the spirit of social justice may help explicate the harms of

internalized oppression, and discover what intentions lay behind these interactions. Moreover,

this study delineated the immense impact that ISM has on the lives of Indigenous Peoples,

practitioners, and students in the field of mental health counseling, ultimately yielding important

mental health information, in addition to important recommendations for coping, systematic

change enactments, and calls for enhanced intrapersonal and interpersonal knowledge, skills, and

awareness (Sue & Sue, 2008; Sue et al., 1992).

For true change enactments to occur, increased focus needs to be placed not merely upon

those who have been the most disenfranchised, degraded, and mistreated in society, but upon the

perpetrators who continue to disenfranchise, degrade, and mistreat. This process fundamentally

comprises of exploring the harms that are still occurring in society, including ISM, and helping

others understanding their part in this interconnected dynamic. With goodwill, cooperation, and a

dedication to interconnection, we can ultimately work together to heal the soul wound that has

been incurred upon Indigenous Peoples. With empathy, compassion, forgiveness, and altruistic

love, we can promote peace and healing within a world of stagnation, and depravity. With and within hope, Crazy Horse described this best;

"Upon suffering beyond suffering: the Red Nation shall rise again and it shall be a blessing for a sick world. A world filled with broken promises, selfishness and separations. A world longing for light again. I see a time of Seven Generations when all the colors of mankind will gather under the Sacred Tree of Life and the whole Earth will become one circle again."

~ Crazy Horse (Azquotes, 2020).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Demographic Questionnaire

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Chosen Pseudonym for this Study: _____

(Example: Grey-Eyes_99)

Date of Birth: _____

(Day, Month, Year)

Gender: _____

(Female, Male, Transgender, Intersex, Berdache, Two-Spirited, Other – write in)

Sexual Orientation:

_____

(Heterosexual, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Asexual, Pansexual, Other – write in)

Province/Territory/State of Residence: _____

(Alberta, Ontario, Yukon, Wisconsin, Oregon, Florida)

Country of Permanent Residence: _____

<div align="center">(Canada, The United States of America)</div>

Ethnicity: _____

- Native American
- Alaska Native
- First Nations Canadian
- Inuit
- Metis
- Native Hawaiian
- Pacific Islander
- White or European American
- Asian American
- Black or African American
- Latino or Hispanic
- Middle Eastern American
- Multiracial/ Biracial (write-in)
- Other - Not Listed (write-in)

Tribal Affiliation: _____

<div align="center">(Proof of status or blood quantum not needed)</div>

Religious/Spiritual Affiliation/Identification: _____

Professional Field: _____

- Psychology
- Community Counseling
- Rehabilitation Counseling
- Addictions Counseling
- Vocational Counseling

- Marriage and Family Therapy
- Psychiatry
- Psychiatric Nursing
- Social Work

Worker Status: _____

(Professional Designation(s), years of work in the field)

Student Status: _____

(Professional Program, University Affiliation, Year of Program)

- Undergraduate Student
- Post-Baccalaureate Student
- Master's Student
- Ph.D. Student
- Post-Doc Student

Socioeconomic Status: _____

- Poverty – Less than $18000
- Working Class - $18000 - $30000
- Lower Middle Class - $35000-$75000
- Middle Class - $75000 - $100000
- Upper Middle Class - $100000 - $500000
- Upper Class - $500000+

Primary E-mail: _____

(Ex) Firstname.lastname@yahoo.com)

Secondary E-mail: _____

(Ex) Firstname.lastname@yahoo.com)

Primary Phone Number: _____

<p style="text-align:center">1-(Area Code)-222-3333</p>

Secondary Phone Number: _____

<p style="text-align:center">1-(Area Code)-222-3333</p>

Skype Name/ Id: _____

Permanent Address:

_____

_____

(Include Apartment or Suite Number, Street Number, City, Province/State, Country, Zip or Postal Code – May be needed if compensation funds need to be mailed instead of e-mailed.)

Mailing Address (If different from Permanent Address): _____

_____

(Include Apartment or Suite Number, Street Number, City, Province/State, Country, Zip or Postal Code – May be needed if compensation funds need to be mailed instead of e-mailed.)

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

1. What spirituality/religion do you endorse or adhere to?

   Probe A) What sorts of practices do you engage in?

   Probe B) What spiritual/religious beliefs do you hold?

2. What spiritual/religious microaggressions have you experienced? Please list and describe some of these accounts.

   Probe A) What were these experiences like?

   Probe B) What emotions or thoughts did you experience as a result of them?

   Probe C) What consequences or repercussions did you associate with these experiences?

3. Where did these spiritual/microaggressions occur?

   Probe A) In what context (if any) did you know the perpetrator?

   Probe B) In what ways (if any) did the microaggression experience change your relationship with the perpetrator?

   Probe C) In what ways (if any) did the microaggression experience alter your experience of the environment where it occurred?

4. Have you experienced any spiritual/religious microaggressions within the mental health field or related training programs? Please describe these experiences if they occurred.

   Probe A) In what ways (if any) did the microaggression experience change your relationship with the perpetrator?

   Probe B) In what ways (if any) did the microaggression experience alter your experience of the environment where it occurred?

5. How have you coped with spiritual/religious microaggressions?

   Probe A) What sources of support did you reach out to (if any)?

   Probe B) What coping mechanisms were most helpful to you?

   Probe C) What would you recommend to other Indigenous individuals to help them cope with spiritual/religious microaggressions?

6. What can be done to decrease the frequency of racial and spiritual microaggressions?

   Probe A) What policy amendments (if any) can be made to decrease the frequency or severity of racial and spiritual microaggressions?

7. How do you feel now that the interview has been concluded?

   Probe A) Do you have any final thoughts or comments about your experiences with microaggressions?

   Probe B) Do you have any other suggestions as to what can be done about spiritual/religious microaggressions?

The following is a description of microaggressions and some examples of spiritual microaggressions:

A microaggression is defined as an everyday verbal or non-verbal slight, snub, or insult which conveys hostile, derogatory, or negative messages about target persons based solely upon minority membership within a marginalized group (Sue et al., 2007).

According to Sue (2010) There are three primary categories of microaggressions:

- *Microassaults*: explicit derogatory incidents characterized by violent verbal/ nonverbal attacks meant intentionally to hurt the target via avoidance, name-calling, discriminatory actions.
  - *Ex) A person views people dressed in traditional clothing and makes the comment; "I'm glad my religion doesn't make me dress like that; those Indians are probably as dumb as they look right now in those costumes."*
  - *Ex) A person jokes; "When Natives smoke Peyote they are just making excuses to get high. Those prairie rats get wasted and try to pass that off as a spiritual vision."*
  - *Ex) Someone says to an Indigenous person; "Your spiritual beliefs are so superstitious and primitive; what you do is pretty much the equivalent of witchcraft, and it is not of God."*

- *Microinsults*: behavioral/verbal remarks, convey insensitivity, and rudeness to demean a person's identity/heritage.
  - *Ex) Someone smells sweet grass being smudged and retorts; "Something stinks like marijuana, I wish they would stop burning that stuff."*
  - *Ex) Someone mocks doing a rain dance, when there is a drought, or makes the comment; "Dancing is obviously not going to make it rain- that's not how science works."*
  - *Ex) Someone describes a sweat and the other person responds; "You must be crazy to go in there, it's just going to dehydrate you and make you start to hallucinate."*
  - *Ex) A person comments at a ceremony; "How do they know what song they are singing? All of those songs sound alike, and they are just yelling random sounds."*
  - *Ex) A person asks another person if they will be attending the powwow over the weekend, and the other person retorts: "No. I don't feel like getting mugged this weekend."*

- *Microinvalidations:* primarily verbal comments or behaviors; negate, nullify, exclude thoughts, feelings, experiences of people of color.
  - *Ex) A student asks for a day off from school to attend a cultural ceremony such a summer solstice Powwow and is denied this request.*
  - *Ex) Native Spirituality is left off of a demographic questionnaire that asks about what religion/spirituality they endorse.*
  - *Ex) When an Indigenous person confronts a microaggression they are met with being told; "You are being too sensitive," or alternatively; "Why can't you take a joke?" and are made out to be the problem in the situation.*
  - *Ex) A sweat is described to a person who says; "How do you people handle that heat?"*

- *Ex) A student automatically assumes their Indigenous peer has received a traditional Indigenous spiritual name, and that they have gone on a vision quest or engaged in other practices without considering their tribal affiliations and individual endorsement of beliefs.*

APPENDIX C

Participant Consent Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE: *An Exploration of Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions*
Principal Investigators:

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Additional Researchers:

Amanda R. Young, M.A.
Ph.D. Student
Health Sciences Counseling & Counseling Psychology Department
Oklahoma State University
Tribal Affiliation: Mandan, Hidatsa, & Arikara (MHA) Nation

Megan K. Smith, M.A.
Ph.D. Student
Department of Counseling Psychology & Community Services
University of North Dakota
Tribal Affiliation: Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI)

Tamba-Kuii Bailey, Ph.D.
Department of Counseling Psychology & Community Services
University of North Dakota
Tribal Affiliation: N/A; Not Affiliated

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STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

A person who is planning to participate in this research must give his, her, or their informed consent to such participation. This consent must be based on an understanding of the nature and risks of the research. This document provides information that is important for this understanding. Research projects include only subjects who choose voluntarily to take part. Please take your time in making your decision as to whether to participate. If you have questions at any time, please ask.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

You are invited to be in a qualitative research study aiming to explore Indigenous spiritual microaggressions. A microaggression is defined as an everyday verbal or non-verbal slight, snub, or insult which conveys hostile, derogatory, or negative messages about target persons based solely upon minority membership within a marginalized group (Sue et al., 2007). A microaggression is a therefore form of subtle discrimination or racism. This study is focused on understanding microaggressions aimed at Indigenous spirituality and religion, including how and where these experiences occurred, the extent to which they impacted work or academic environments, interpersonal relationships, and personal wellbeing. Coping skills following these instances will also be discussed, as will potential policy changes at public and institutional levels to decrease the frequency and severity of these microaggressions for future Indigenous students, professionals, and public community members.

 You must self-identify as Native American, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, First Nations, Inuit, or Metis, previously and hereafter referred to as Indigenous Peoples. You must be a professional working within, or a graduate student (Masters or Ph.D. level) studying within any of the following fields: mental health counseling, rehabilitation counseling, addictions counseling, counseling psychology, clinical psychology, school psychology, psychiatry, social work, psychiatric nursing, and marriage and family therapy.

The purpose of this research study is to interview you, as an Indigenous person engaged in the mental health field, about your experiences with spiritual microaggressions, including how you have coped with these instances. The investigators hope to understand how and where spiritual microaggressions are experienced in Indigenous populations, how these impacted personal, employment, or academic relationships, and the impact these experiences had on your wellbeing. The investigators hope to understand what kinds of spiritual microaggressions occur, and what changes can be made at institutional and public levels (including policy changes) to stop these incidents of subtle racism and religious/spiritual discrimination. The qualitative nature of this study is intended to reveal how Indigenous mental health students and professionals have experienced these incidents using their own words and personalized descriptions.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?

Approximately 8-15 people over the age of 18 who identify as Native American, Native Hawaiian, Alaskan Native, First Nations, Inuit, or Metis will take part in this study. These individuals will identify as being a professional or a student working or studying within a mental

health field. Applicable mental health fields will include the following: mental health counseling, rehabilitation counseling, addictions counseling, counseling psychology, clinical psychology, school psychology, psychiatry, social work, psychiatric nursing, and marriage and family therapy.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in the study will last approximately 2 hours' total. You will be asked to complete an informed consent form, and a short demographic questionnaire which should take no more than 20 minutes' total to complete. You will also have the opportunity to view interview questions in advance so you can spend some time contemplating your answers to the questions, as you may want to search your memory for instances of microaggressions you wish to comment on. You will participate in one 60-90-minute in-person, speaker-phone or video-call interview, which will be audio recorded. If you are interviewed via telephone, or video-call you will be interviewed in a private space of your choosing. If you are interviewed in person, a private space will be provided for the interview to take place. Please note that if you choose not to be in a private location while engaging in this interview your confidentiality cannot be ensured; please use your own discretion to choose a private location for your interview. After your interview has been completed, the researcher team will transcribe it. You will be e-mailed a transcribed version of your interview in a password protected document so you can review this transcript and add comments if you choose to clarify or elaborate on any of your statements. The password needed to open this document will be sent to you in a separate e-mail. The amount of time that this process takes will be up to you, but we ask that you take no longer than two weeks to engage in this process. In the event that you do not respond to this e-mail with your transcript comments added within two weeks time, your data will be analyzed as is, without additional commentary on your part. You may wish not to comment on any part of the transcript, or you may wish to add more extensive comments or additions to what you said in the interview. As such, this part of the process is based on your personal preferences and discretion.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY?

You will be asked to complete an informed consent form and demographic form, which you will complete in person via hard copy if you are being interviewed in-person, or via e-mail if you are completing an interview via telephone or via video-call software. After your informed consent and demographic form is completed and has been submitted to the interviewer via e-mail, or in-person, you will be asked questions about your experiences of spiritual microaggressions, including how and where these instances occurred, how they impacted your relationships in work, school, or other environments, how they impacted your well-being, and how you coped with these instances. The interview should last approximately 60 minutes in length, and should be no longer than 90 minutes total. You are free to decline answering any questions that you are not comfortable with. You will be asked to complete and return a short demographic questionnaire prior to the start of the interview, which will take approximately 5-10 minutes. Audio recording will run for the duration of your interview for documentation purposes only, as this information will later be used to transcribe your interview. Participation is completely

voluntary, and any participant who chooses to stop participation will still receive a $20 Amazon Gift Card incentive regardless of when they chose to stop the interview process.

For participants who are participating via video chat or phone interview, please follow the instructions below to complete the informed consent procedures:

1. Check your preferred e-mail.
2. Click on the document labelled "Consent Form" to download, read, and complete it. Sign the "Consent Form" by typing your name and the date if you are in agreement with it. Ask questions to the interviewer if you are unsure of anything. Keep a copy of the signed "Consent Form" if you so choose. E-mail a signed copy back to the interviewer.
3. Click on the document labelled "Demographic Form" to download, read, and complete it. Ask questions to the interviewer if you are unsure of anything. Keep a copy of the signed "Demographic Form" if you so choose. E-mail a signed copy back to the interviewer.
4. Click on the document labelled "Interview Questions" to download, read, and contemplate the questions on it prior to your scheduled interview. Examples of microaggression definitions, and examples of spiritual microaggressions are listed there; feel free to look at these examples to help you recall examples of microaggressions from your own life.
5. If you are engaging in a phone interview, the interviewer will call you at your preferred date and time with the preferred phone number you included on your demographic form. The interviewer will be speaking to you on speaker phone while they are in a private office or home office location, and will be using an external audio recorder to record the interview so it can be transcribed later. In the event that you engage in a video-call interview, you will be asked if you prefer Skype or Zoom as a video-call platform, and Callnote software will be used to record the audio from the interview, along with an external recorder in the event that Callnote software fails. These audio recordings will be used to later transcribe your interview. If you prefer to use Skype, the interviewer will ask to exchange Skype usernames with you so a Skype call can occur at your preferred date and time. If you prefer to use Zoom, then a link will be sent to you via your preferred e-mail for you to click on to start the video-call at your preferred date and time.

For participants who are participating via in-person interview, please follow the instructions below to complete the informed consent procedures:

1. Read and complete the Consent Form by signing your name and the date if you are in agreement with it. Ask questions to the interviewer if you are unsure of anything. Sign, date, and keep a second copy of this consent form for your records.
2. Read and complete the Demographic Form. Ask questions to the interviewer if you are unsure of anything. Sign, date, and keep a second copy of this consent form for your records.

3. Read the Interview Questions to contemplate the questions on it prior to your interview. Examples of microaggression definitions, and examples of spiritual microaggressions are listed there; feel free to look at these examples to help you recall examples of microaggressions from your own life.
4. The interviewer will be speaking to you in a private location at a mutually agreed upon time and will be using an external audio recorder to record the interview, so it can be transcribed later. If you need to cancel your in-person interview, please let the interviewer know and provide your contact information so that a phone or online video-interview can take place at a later date instead.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE STUDY?
The only known associated risk of participation is that participants may experience discomfort while reflecting on past experiences of subtle racism, including the extent to which these experiences impacted their interpersonal relationships, workplace or academic environments, and wellbeing. Discomfort levels may vary from person to person, particularly if a participant has experienced thoughts of suicidal ideation or self-harm following experinces of subtle racism, or spiritual/religious discrimination. For this reason, the interviewer will include internet links and phone numbers to crisis lines, along with a detailed list of counseling resources both in the United States and Canada on this informed consent form. The principal investigator has also been trained and certified in suicide risk assessment, and will contact a licensed psychologist if needed. If imminent suicide risk exists then voluntary or involuntary hospitalization will follow if needed. Please also note that if you are recruited at a conference/retreat there is a chance that others may have seen you expressing your interest and/or asking questions about the study, as such, people may make assume you participated in the study, nevertheless your confidentiality will be protected as much as possible, and your answers will be de-identified in the results write-up. For participants who are recruited via snowball sampling, or by having researchers or their social network reach out to you individually, please also note that the people who reach out to you may also assume you participated in the study, nevertheless your answers will also be de-identified and your confidentiality with be protected as much as possible.
In the event that you become upset by any of the questions, you may choose to stop at any time or skip any question. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings after this study, you are encouraged to contact, the National Suicide Prevention Line at 1-800-273-TALK or 1-800-273-8255. Alternatively, you can log on to https://www.contact-usa.org/chat.html. This URL will link you with the Lifeline Crisis Chat which can provide 24/7 online emotional support, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention services. Chat specialists will listen and support you as needed, you also can call the United Way Helpline at 211 which can help you locate appropriate support services in your area. You can also find counseling services in your local area by using the following URL links; https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/find-a-canadian-certified-counsellor/, and https://www.networktherapy.com/directory/find_therapist.asp. Canadian residents can also use the following URL link to find additional regional crisis centers in Canada;

http://suicideprevention.ca/need-help. The following URL link can also be used to find crisis numbers and centers across Canada and the United States: https://yourlifecounts.org/.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?
It is our hope that other Indigenous people might benefit in the future from this study because of your participation. This interview may also allow for personal reflection and a deeper understanding of your experiences of subtle racism and discrimination. Sharing your experiences and opinions will also allow for psychologists, counselors, employers, educators, and other Indigenous Peoples to have a better understanding of the impact of spiritual microaggressions. As such, information from this study may provide greater awareness of these incidents, including how to support Indigenous Peoples through these experiences, and what policy changes need to take place for wider public awareness, and decreased discrimination in institutional settings.

WILL IT COST ME ANYTHING TO BE IN THIS STUDY?
You are not expected to have any costs for being in this research study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?
You will be paid $20 via Amazon Gift Card for being a participant in this research study. If you revoke your participation at any time you will still receive a $20 gift card compensation for your time.

WHO IS FUNDING THE STUDY?
The University of North Dakota and the researchers involved in this specific study are not receiving payments from other organizations, agencies, or companies to conduct this research study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The records of this study will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. In any report about this study that might be published, you will not be identified, and care will be taken to de-identify all interview material provided.

Any information that is obtained in this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. You should know, however, that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court or to tell authorities if we believe you have abused or neglected a child, or if you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. In the event that this research is audited, people who audit IRB procedures will also have access to this data.

Confidentiality will be maintained by means of separating the informed consent from the audio recordings and transcripts of the audio recordings. Audio recording will be stored in a cloud storage folder which only research team members have access to. All transcriptions will be

stored in a password-protected computer file that can only be accessed by the research team members. Transcription files will also be stored onto a password protected cloud storage folder that only research team members have access to. If we present or publish the findings from this study, we will describe the study results in a summarized manner so that you cannot be identified by others. Quotes which are utilized in future presentations or publications will be linked to a pseudonym which you created as such, your name will not be connected to information which is published in order to maintain your confidentiality. In the event that you do not create a pseudonym, one will be created for you by the researchers to ensure your confidentiality.

IS THIS STUDY VOLUNTARY?
Your participation is completely voluntary. You are under no obligation to complete the interview or the research study. You may choose not to participate or discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You will still be compensated for your time regardless of if or when you choose to discontinue your participation. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of North Dakota in any way.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS?
The researcher conducting this study is Cerynn D. Desjarlais. You may ask any questions you have now, and at any point throughout the duration of the study. Please continue asking questions to ensure you have received answers to your satisfaction. If you later have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research please contact Cerynn D. Desjarlais at 701-317-4701 during the day and after hours. You can also reach the researcher's academic advisor, Dr. Rachel L. Navarro at 701-777-2635 during the day.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact The University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at (701) 777-4279.

- You may also call this number about any problems, complaints, or concerns you have about this research study.
- You may also call this number if you cannot reach research staff, or you wish to talk with someone who is independent of the research team.
- General information about being a research subject can be found by clicking "Information for Research Participants" on the web site: http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/research-participants.cfm

I give consent to be audiotaped during this study.

Please initial: _____ Yes   _____ No

☐ **No, I do not agree to participate in this research study.**

☐ **Yes, I agree to participate in this research study.**

Your signature or typed signature and date indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You are encouraged to print and save a copy of this form for your own personal records.

Subjects Name: _____

_____   _____
Signature of Subject   Date

I have discussed the above points with the subject or, where appropriate, with the subject's legally authorized representative.

_____   _____
Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent   Date

APPENDIX D

A COMPREHENSIVE COMPENDIUM OF
INDIGENOUS COLONIAL HISTORY AND DISCRIMINATION

Rationale for a Topical Literature Review

To truly understand the daily discrimination Indigenous Peoples endure, we must first

understand the complex dynamics of history which have ultimately contributed to and produced

their current status and position within society (Hill et al., 2010; Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014).

Appreciating contemporary relations between Indigenous and White People therefore requires a

keen awareness and grounding within North American antiquity including a knowledge of

colonial history and subsequent generations of overtly discriminatory actions (Hill et al., 2010;

Robertson, 2015; Senter & Ling, 2017). More specifically, for modern-day microaggressions to

be recognized and comprehended, the cultural context of Indigenous Peoples, including

historical oppression and colonialism, must be considered (Hill et al., 2010). Belcourt-Dittloff

and Stewart (2000) likewise suggest that historical racism, including genocide, reneged treaties,

and exploitation, may have a role in the biopsychosocial functioning of Indigenous Peoples

whom face immense physical and mental health disparities in contrast to the general population.

Canel-Çınarbaş and Yohani (2019) also indicated that participants in their study of

Indigenous microaggressions noted the importance of comprehending the impact of

microaggressions in relation to historical context. More specifically, participants of the Canel-

Çınarbaş and Yohani (2019) study were noted to view microaggressions as occurring within the

context of the Canadian government's historical relationship with Indigenous Peoples, including

the invalidation of spirituality, culture, and identity, in addition to racial segregation, and perceptions of second-class citizenship. As such, Indigenous Peoples must be viewed within a broader sociopolitical and historical context to inherently grasp their modern experiential percipience.

The literature review to follow will therefore delineate the experiences of racial and cultural microaggressions aimed at Indigenous Peoples, and to the greatest extent possible will touch upon those experiences that have been documented that speak to spiritual discrimination. A brief history of Indigenous genocide, oppression, and discrimination will also be illustrated to provide sufficient, yet perpetually incomplete information pertaining to the historical context that influences the sociopolitical realities experienced by Indigenous Peoples to this day. Furthermore, the extent to which microaggressions impact mental and physical health within minority populations will be discussed to provide an understanding of the severity of the implications caused by these forms of covert discrimination. This literature review should therefore provide readers with sufficient information and context to understand the importance of the proposed research study.

The Contextual Foundation of Discrimination towards Indigenous Peoples

While a vast array of Indigenous Nations and tribes representing extensive diversity in culture, lived experiences, and spirituality continue to exist, Indigenous Peoples of North America nevertheless share a common history of surviving physical and cultural genocide, historical trauma, forced removal from land, and ongoing societal oppression through discrimination (Hill et al., 2010). The immense fortitude of Indigenous Peoples has allowed many to survive; however, those who survived lived to endure ongoing atrocities enacted by White colonial settlers. These colonial influences continue to impact Indigenous Peoples to this day, while the resiliency of Indigenous Peoples continues to help them to survive ongoing

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racialized oppression. As such, in order to understand the phenomenological lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples, the context of modern-day racism must also be well understood. Therefore, it is paramount to delineate the history in which it is embedded, the events that laid this foundation, and the impact this has had on the well-being and livelihood of generations.

Historically, White colonial powers sought to possess the land, wealth, and resources of North America which was already inhabited by Indigenous Peoples; as such, the very existence of Indigenous Peoples was immediately and henceforth, conceptualized as a *problem* (Hill et al., 2010). European powers therefore sought to eliminate and exclude Indigenous Peoples from their own homelands and from the dominant culture they were intent on creating there (Hill et al., 2010; Feagin & Elias, 2013). In particular, government initiatives and organizations, including European religious powers, effectively sought to alter the landscape of North America by culturally and physically isolating Indigenous Peoples through racial segregation, economic isolation, and cultural eradication (Hill et al., 2010). As such, White Europeans unscrupulously gained advantages and privilege through the use of theft and abuse incurred upon Indigenous Peoples, which ultimately was legalized via systemic racism (Feagin & Elias, 2013). Consequently, the emerging dominant culture of North America was ruthlessly created solely for the benefit of White individuals, to the exclusion of all others, including the original peoples of this land (Feagin & Elias, 2013). As such, brutal racist discrimination and ethnic oppression is embedded into the very foundation of North American society (Feagin & Elias, 2013).

Colonizers the world over have effectively authorized and enacted immense physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual damage upon People of Color, including Indigenous People (Frosh, 2013). According to Adorno et al. (1950, as cited in Frosh, 2013, p. 148) Early Europeans initially conceived of minority group members as a threat, excluded them from the

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dominant culture, and subsequently hated them for their artificially ascribed societal position. As such, colonial powers have habitually placed minority group members into the dramatized, denigrated, and artificially labelled role of *others* who are then marginalized and systematically excluded from the in-group for their projected "otherness" (Frosh, 2013, p. 146). The xenophobic attitudes and misguided assumptions of Early Europeans have therefore disenfranchised Indigenous Peoples based on arbitrary characteristics such as phenotype; henceforth, dehumanizing Indigenous People as "racialized others" (Frosh, 2013, p. 149; Hill et al., 2010; LaDuke, 2005).

While many people falsely believe that racism has been extinguished over time, People of Color in North America continue to endure inescapably oppressive marginalization, exclusion, and stigmatization within a predominately White society (Feagin & Elias, 2013). Given these historical realities, it is imperative to acknowledge that ample physical, emotional, and spiritual damage has been enacted via colonial practices which are inherently embedded with racist thought, and which continue to be enacted at present (Frosh, 2013). While scholars generally agree that overt racism has been decreasing over many decades, it is imperative to recognize that unconscious and automatic discriminatory associations remain as remnants of colonial history within society, and represent ubiquitous social cognition which is continually propagated (DeVos & Banaji, 2005; O'Keefe et al., 2015).

Remnants of racist colonial thought can easily be witnessed within contemporary society, including within the use and structure of modern-day language. Terminology within society inherently conveys negative implicit associations, which then have the power to perpetuate and reinforce the notion that some cultures and ideas are *primitive* in nature, while others are *civilized* (Frosh, 2013). Augoustinos and Every (2007) similarly explain linguistically how this sort of an

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"us versus them" (p.13) contrast structure is conceptually founded in a positive self-presentation, while simultaneously viewing the other as a negative presentation. As such, this sort of racist language effectively functions to place minority group members in a negative out-group position by rationalizing their continued exclusion, and marginalization in society, thus recurrently providing justification for their low societal position (Augoustinos & Every, 2007).

Feagin and Elias (2013) likewise summated that inequality and oppression play a central role in contemporary "post-race," and "colorblind" language (p. 955). Augoustinos and Every (2007) similarly suggest that people may attempt to appear as though they are not prejudiced by presenting their own views as being representative of the rational external world as opposed to being indicative of their own individual psychology which is potentially based in racism. Consequently, it appears that linguistic connotations shape the very reality of the world in which we live, in a fashion echoing of social constructivism. As such, when negative connotations are assigned to those who are viewed as *other* or *different,* an entire culture can easily become stigmatized, and in the case of Indigenous Peoples, they may become re-stigmatized with original colonial thought after generations of supposed '*progress.*' Consequently, it is imperative to comprehend the impact of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples both historically, and at present.

Colonialism, War and Genocide

According to Zinn (1980), the first initial contact between Christopher Columbus and the Arawak People was one of curiosity, hospitality, and kind greetings on the part of the Arawak People. The Arawaks are noted to have greeted Columbus and his crew by presenting to them gifts, food, and water (Zinn, 1980). While the Arawaks seem to have viewed Columbus and his men as people to welcome and trade with, Columbus is noted to have had immediate thoughts of subjugating these people; "They were well-built, with good bodies and handsome features…They do not bear arms…" "They would make fine servants… With fifty men we could

subjugate them all…" (Zinn, 1980, p. 1). These thoughts soon translated into forceful action as Columbus is also noted to have written the following; "…I took some of the natives by force in order that they might learn and might give me information whatever there is in these parts." (Zinn, 1980, p. 1). As such, from first contact onward, it appears that White men have viewed Indigenous Peoples as inferior beings who should forcibly be made to be subservient to them.

Christopher Columbus and company went on to exploit Indigenous Peoples in the Caribbean by raping, capturing, burning, and killing them in the name of colonial exploitation and greed (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). Thereafter, subsequent incidents of first contact amongst Indigenous Peoples and White Europeans quickly resulted in widespread xenophobia on the part of European settlers, who reacted by enacting vehement genocidal practices against Indigenous Peoples for generations (LaDuke, 2005; Hill et al., 2010). Genocide was enacted in a variety of forms, including the physical annihilation of immense amounts of Indigenous People via violent military endeavors, economic deprivation, and isolation within forced segregation areas henceforth called reservations (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Hill et al., 2010). As a result, Indigenous populations were near decimated by acts of war, and those who survived were subject to slavery, rape, and forced assimilation (LaDuke, 2005). Disease brought by White settlers also endangered the health of many Indigenous Peoples who had survived inhumane treatment (LaDuke, 2005).

Nearly every human injustice imaginable took place to contribute to the slaughter and near annihilation of millions of human beings throughout North America with little remorse or recompense on the side of White Europeans who profited from the deaths of a great many (Graham, 2002). Indigenous Peoples are thus the survivors of an extensive and arduous history of colonialism enacted by White People from first contact onward which fundamentally altered

the cultural landscape of North America and the welfare of the First Peoples of this land. Indigenous Peoples have thus been historically conceived of as a "problem" which White European settlers have attempted to get rid of (Hill et al., 2010, p.106).

Wars, battles, and military campaigns were thus propagated with the goal to obliterate Indigenous Peoples both physically and culturally (LaDuke, 2005). According to Graham (2002) literally millions of Indigenous Peoples throughout the United States and Canada were slaughtered in the interest of European colonization. Graham (2002) elaborates that for approximately 400 years from 1500-1900, the Indigenous death rate shadowed the birth rate due to war, disease, and horrific conditions within boarding/residential schools and segregated reservations. Ultimately, xenophobic European settlers rationalized the murder of Indigenous Peoples throughout the entirety of North America by labelling them as dehumanized savages whose demise was laudable as opposed to lamented (LaDuke, 2005; Hill et al., 2010; Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). Despite killing millions of people, Fenelon and Trafzer (2014) explain that White settlers somehow conceptualized themselves as being *civilized* while labeling Indigenous Peoples as *savage;* thus, creating a racial separation and social stratification that was later institutionalized within North America. Fenelon and Trafzer (2014) also report that Indigenous Peoples who were initially enslaved and killed were eventually replaced by enslaving and exploiting African Peoples; thus, enacting horrific periods of racial formation that impacted generations of human beings globally. As such, the avidity and rapacious ways of the White colonialists was such that any compassion they may have once possessed was lost amidst their callous pursuit of profit.

Military endeavors were also led to enact the forced removal and segregation of Indigenous People, which later became known as historical tragedies such as The Trail of Tears

and Wounded Knee Massacres (Schultz, et al., 2016; Dennis, 2016). As such, tribal members who survived genocidal atrocities were forcibly removed from their ancestral homelands and made to walk immensely far distances causing a vast number of people to die of exhaustion, starvation, and disease (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Moreover, culturally diverse tribes were also forced by officials to share the same restricted reservation lands; thus, failing to recognize inherent differences and relational histories amongst tribes (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Consequently, many Indigenous People were made to carve out an existence away from sacred ancestral lands where spiritual ceremonies and traditions took place (LaDuke, 2005). Moreover, when land was owned by Indigenous Peoples, economic deprivation and isolation resulted in a lack of resources, causing tribal members to sell off land allotments for a small portion of their true worth to help their loved ones survive (Senter & Ling, 2017). To add insult to injury, land allotments have also been effectively lost over years due to acts of land development fraud (Senter & Ling, 2017). As such, while Indigenous Peoples valued the land in totality as sacred, including the plants and animals living upon it, White Peoples valued land ownership only for their benefit (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Ultimately, such perspectives engrained with a colonial mindset have contributed not only to the unjust death and displacement of countless Indigenous Peoples, but also to the desolation of the environment, wildlife, and sacred ritual sites which Indigenous Peoples hold sacrosanct.

Long after initial placements on reservations, Indigenous relocation continued to be enacted in other forms. For instance, the 1956 Indian Relocation Act caused for Indigenous Peoples of the USA to be streamlined away from Indigenous communities into White Urban areas with the promise of employment; unfortunately, this employment consisted of stereotypically gendered work roles in low-level occupations (Glenn, 2015). Kulis and Tsethlikai

(2016) likewise indicated that due to the Indian Relocation Act, Indigenous Peoples were isolated from one another, placed in substandard housing, and therefore became increasingly susceptible to poverty and cultural deprivation.

Efforts to eradicate Indigenous Peoples were not only historically enacted via government and military directed endeavors, but also took place informally at individual and community levels (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). For instance, the California Gold Rush represented a time when small groups of White pioneers murdered Indigenous Peoples who they conceived of as a barrier to gaining material wealth (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). Settlers were also systematically enticed to engage in the practice of scalping wherein they dehumanized, pursued, and murdered innocent Indigenous adults and children to gain monetary compensation in exchange for the proof of their death (Newsom & Bissonette-Lewey, 2012). Ultimately, these White settlers valued owning the land and resources Indigenous Peoples controlled, such as lumber, minerals, farm and ranch land, but did not value the lives and welfare of their fellow human beings who occupied that land (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). While settlers held a worldview that valued land ownership, Indigenous Peoples valued the land in and of itself, including the plants and animals on it as inherently sacred (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Colonial settlers longed to own the land but cared little for those who lived upon it, ultimately contributing to the unnecessary and unjust death and demise of many of the First Peoples of North America.

Ultimately it was the colonial greed for power, wealth, and renown that spurred the onset of mass annihilations, and the social reinforcement of killing Indigenous Peoples globally. North America was no exception to these colonial ideals, which cost Indigenous Peoples their land, livelihood, and welfare for generations. As such, White colonial violence represents a morbid

part of history upon the North American Continent that ignorantly goes unrecognized both within the general public and within academia; both of which have been created and founded upon a Eurocentric frame of reference (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). The general public, whose ancestors may well have profited from the death and demise of Indigenous Peoples, may well never know the true scope of the atrocities that aided their ancestors materially, while impoverishing them morally.

Despite pervasive war and genocide that have been historically enacted against Indigenous Peoples, many survived and later thrived (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). Indigenous Peoples now represent approximately 2% of the population within the USA (USA Census Bureau, 2017) and 4.9% of the population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2018). A major misconception and stereotype present amongst the general population is that Indigenous Peoples are largely extinct, and that any who survived represent historical relics who lack modern-day relevance (Hill, et al., 2010). This extinction and extermination rhetoric feeds into false notions that Indigenous People of North America either no longer exist or no longer matter in society (Fenelon 2016; Senter & Ling, 2017). Moreover, this genocidal discourse effectively excludes Indigenous People from social analyses within scientific and academic endeavors (Fenelon, 2016; Senter & Ling, 2017). This exclusion from social analyses may well represent a microinvalidation in and of itself, as the experiences of Indigenous Peoples are often not represented in research studies, including those studies claiming to explicitly investigate the experiences of minority group members (Fenelon, 2016; Senter & Ling, 2017).

Despite the fact that Indigenous Peoples resiliently survived the genocidal atrocities discussed in this section, it is imperative that all people know and fundamentally apprehend how Indigenous Peoples were immediately and unsympathetically conceived of as a "problem" (p.

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106) to be dealt with by White People through subjugation, violence, and dominance (Hill et al., 2010). While White settlers historically attempted to abolish the Indigenous Peoples and Cultures of North America by dispossessing them of their lives, land, and resources, ultimately, Indigenous Peoples resiliently survived; their very existence thus presenting yet another "problem" for White People (Hill et al., 2010, p. 106). As such, White powers took on the strategy to "kill the Indian and save the man." (Adams, 1995, as cited in Gone, 2013, p. 689).

Cultural and Spiritual Genocide

In order to truly grasp and address contemporary microaggressions targeted at Indigenous Peoples, the unabashed history and cultural context of Indigenous Peoples needs to be well appreciated and explicated (Hill et al., 2010). This goes beyond an understanding of commonly known historical events, battles, and atrocities, and speaks to increasingly more covert forms of violence and discrimination. This section will therefore delineate the harms enacted upon Indigenous Peoples by cultural and spiritual genocide, in addition to exploring what life became for Indigenous Peoples who were isolated and forced onto reservations to live out lives amidst reneged treaties. While only those who have phenomenologically experienced these events will ever truly know the full extent of the harms enacted by them, it is imperative that time, effort, and elocution be placed into this endeavor by the remainder of us to gain a sense of knowledge, awareness, and empathetic understanding of such proceedings. Thus, this section is dedicated to the explication of these colonial atrocities to provide sufficient context for understanding the sociohistorical nature which has shaped the lived experiences of Indigenous People in the modern era.

"If the Great Spirit had desired me to be a white man he would have made me so

in the first place. He put in your heart certain wishes and plans, and in my heart

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he put other and different desires. It is not necessary for eagles to be crows." –

Chief Sitting Bull. [(American Indian Words of Wisdom.), 2020]

Subsequent to brutal physical genocide, cultural genocide was enacted against Indigenous survivors who were relocated to isolated and desolate pockets of economically disadvantaged land known as reserves and settlements (Scott et al., 2017). Treaties originally enacted to provide some semblance of land ownership, community care, and well-being amongst Indigenous People were largely reneged; land repossession took place and continues to take place in modern society to this day (Belcourt-Dittloff & Stewart, 2000; LaDuke, 2005). As such, Indigenous Peoples were largely separated from others in North American society, and correspondingly forced to occupy a low socioeconomic level within society. Said (1978, as cited in Hill et al., 2010, p. 112), suggests that Euro-Americans have thus maintained White superiority by creating a reviled representation of the *other,* who unlike them, does not hold power gained through imperialism.

In addition to invading and dominating an entire continent contributing to the death of millions of Indigenous Peoples through war, disease, and genocide, settlers also built institutions and systems that distorted the truth of historical events (Fenlon & Trafzer, 2014). The historical Christian Church particularly contributed to a xenophobic fear and repression of Indigenous Spiritual practices (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014; LaDuke, 2005; Hill et al., 2010). Religious and racial domination were inherently inter-twined as settlers reinforced their belief in Eurocentric religious superiority by labeling themselves as *civilized* and Indigenous People's as *uncivilized* (Fenelon and Trafzer, 2014). To summarize quite plainly, Europeans held xenophobic views about Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices from first contact onward, therefore leading to the oppression of their beliefs, and traditional practices thereafter (LaDuke, 2005; Hill et al., 2010). As such, the supremacy of Christianity over other religious and spiritual beliefs was

propagated by "The Church" (p. 106) which endorsed spiritual genocide and the domination over non-Christian others (Hill et al., 2010). Indigenous Peoples were therefore subjugated by European settlers who justified their unscrupulous actions with religion, believing they were saving the souls of savages; all while inflicting immense harm to their fellow humans both physically and spiritually (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014).

Indigenous Peoples were horridly mistreated by settlers attempting to violently control and destroy them in the name of religion (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). The utilization of corporal punishment such as imprisonment, food deprivation, and physical abuse including whippings also transpired to control and suppress Indigenous Peoples (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). Widespread assimilation practices were inevitably utilized to radically alter the culture, and spiritual beliefs and practices of surviving Indigenous Peoples in an effort to "kill the Indian and save the man" (Adams, 1995, as cited in Gone, 2013, p. 689). This xenophobic hatred of the other, spurred the mandatory apprehension of Indigenous children who were removed from their families and home-communities and forced to acculturate to the culture and religion endorsed by White settlers (Evans-Campbell, 2008). As such, Indigenous Peoples became the targets of Christian indoctrination meant to radically convert Indigenous children by punishing them for endorsing their traditional culture and spirituality; thus, forcing them to live in a way congruent with that of the European settlers.

Boarding/Residential schools therefore represent a concentrated socio-political and religious effort to culturally assimilate the remaining Indigenous Peoples who survived war, disease, and relocation, into European American culture by targeting their children (Graham, 2002; Gone, 2013). As such, both Canada and the United States have abject histories which effectively separated Indigenous children from their families to forcefully acculturate them into

the White dominant culture through the institution of education (Glenn, 2015; Hill et al., 2010; Senter & Ling, 2017). The mandatory removal of children effectively diminished the cultural influences of family members while extinguishing tribal connections, and assimilating children into accepted Christian Euro-American and Euro-Canadian roles (Glenn, 2015; Gone, 2013).

The horrific conditions within boarding/residential schools have been noted as being comparable to that of concentration camps where children were forcibly removed from their parents and communities (Graham, 2002). School officials are noted to have abused children sexually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually in addition to reinforcing emotional suppression (Gone, 2013). Moreover, at these institutions' children were punished for and prohibited from speaking their natal language, and engaging in spiritual practices and beliefs, thus substantially contributing to the loss of Indigenous language and culture (Gone, 2013; Glenn, 2015, Evans-Campbell, 2008; Adams, 1995, as cited in Evans-Campbell, 2008, p. 327).

Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998) reinforce the idea that there were no cultural role models within these institutions, and instead Indigenous children were shamed by White People and viewed as racially and culturally inferior. Glenn (2015) likewise suggests that colonial settler education taught Indigenous children "their place" (p.68) in society by indoctrinating them into racialized and gendered roles enforcing that they should be content with the "limited future" (p.68) allotted to them. Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998) remind us that the underlying message to Indigenous families was that parents were incapable of raising their children properly, despite numerous Indigenous children dying while attending boarding school due to being homesick and contracting disease. As such, many children who grew up attending these schools left with diminished self-esteem, a lack of traditional culture, spiritual belonging, community ties, and

with little understanding of how to raise a family of their own in a way that is congruent with past generations (Gone, 2013).

According to Evans-Campbell et al. (2012) the Indigenous boarding school survivors have been found to have high rates of suicidal thoughts and substance use compared to those who did not attend boarding schools. The intergenerational transition of these problems is also salient; as the children of boarding school attendees have also been found to have a higher lifetime prevalence of symptoms indicative of anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and suicidality (Evans-Campbell et al. 2012). Gone (2013) discusses how family disruption, religious suppression, and coercive assimilation all contribute to the enactment of historical trauma which is cumulative in nature. Cultural and spiritual genocide of Indigenous lifeways has therefore caused immense collective harm which can best be summated as historical trauma which continues to impact Indigenous Peoples to this day (Gone, 2013).

Over time, this discrimination has culminated in overwhelming disparities in physical health outcomes, and has enacted social and psychological harm (Hill et al., 2010; Belcourt-Dittloff & Stewart, 2000). Ultimately, it can be said that a soul wound has been created by the harms of colonialism and related intergenerational historical trauma which continues to be a detriment to Indigenous Peoples to this day (Hill et al., 2010; Duran et al., 2008). Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998) describe the trauma of Indigenous Peoples as being historical unresolved grief that is intergenerational in nature. Gone (2013) explains that historical trauma represents shared experiences wherein Indigenous Peoples are perceived of and labelled as being "racially and culturally inferior" to others (p. 695). Gone (2013) illustrates how the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma is different than that of PTSD, which represents the harms incurred upon one individual, whereas historical trauma represents a collective shared experience

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of oppression which is complex in nature. According to Evans-Campbell (2008) historical trauma is transmitted at interpersonal and societal levels; both directly, and indirectly. For instance, historical trauma might cause for decreased traditional spiritual adherence, and a lack of parenting skills, leading to increases in abuse or neglect of children and others, thus increasing substance use (Evans-Campbell, 2008).

Hill et al., (2010) suggest that historical trauma has caused immense physical health disparities. As such, historical trauma has directly impacted the well-being of Indigenous peoples causing suicide, alcohol use, domestic violence, and homicide (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Gone (2013) also suggests that people who endure historical trauma have an increased susceptibility to pathological dysfunction. In fact, there are immense health disparities between Indigenous Peoples and the majority culture which are reflected in a number of domains (Hill et al., 2010). One such domain being significantly higher mortality rates of American Indian/Alaskan Natives than other Americans, thus reducing life expectancy (Hill et al., 2010; Indian Health Services [IHS], 2006).

In fact, American Indians and Alaskan Natives are demonstrated to have significantly higher rates of suicide, homicide, diabetes, and unintentional injuries (Hill, et al., 2010; Indian Health Services [IHS], 2006; Indian Health Services [IHS], 2020). Belcourt-Dittloff and Stewart (2000) likewise suggest that Native Americans have high mortality, unemployment, and poverty rates which are likely the manifested results of historical racism. Furthermore, Indigenous Peoples are known to experience increased rates of heart disease, cancer, diabetes mellitus, chronic lower respiratory disease, cerebrovascular disease, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, kidney disease, septicemia, and hypertension (Indian Health Service, 2019).

In addition to mortality rates related to physical health concerns, Indigenous Peoples are also known to experience disparities in mental health which ultimately contribute to mortality rates which are also higher than that of the general U.S. population (Indian Health Service, 2019). More specifically, Indigenous Peoples experience higher rates of alcohol-induced death, drug-induced death, and accidents. Notably, death due to homicidal assault, and intentional self-harm, including suicide, also occur at higher rates for American Indians/Alaskan Natives than that of the general public (Indian Health Service, 2019).

The IHS (2019) likewise suggests that Indigenous health disparities may be present due to a number of concerning social conditions and economic factors, including poverty, insufficient education, discrimination within health-services, and other quality of life concerns. These health concerns can likewise be found in Canada. For instance, Monchalin, Marques, Reasons, and Arora (2019) describe a horrific account wherein a 34-year-old Indigenous man in Canada was incorrectly assumed by health service staff to be drunk when seeking medical attention at a hospital for a remediable bladder infection, ultimately leading to his untimely death. As such, Monchalin et al. (2019) explain that Indigenous Peoples in Canada have come to be noted by many as "living in 'Third World' conditions within a first world country" (p. 213). Moreover, Monchalin et al., suggest that these third-world conditions are apparent in a number of domains, including infrastructure and housing concerns, pervasive negative health outcomes, widespread unemployment, and modest academic education.

Helms et al., (2012) also elucidated the link between discrimination and mental health; particularly, they expressed that people may be more susceptible to PTSD and associated symptoms due to experiences where cultural or racial self-integrity are threatened. Gone (2013) likewise suggests that mental health disparities in North American Indigenous communities are

strongly impacted by high exposure to stress which may be traumatic in nature. Gone (2013) describes how Indigenous Peoples may explain mental health concerns including substance dependence, PTSD, and depression, as embedded within, and as a result of, historical trauma. Gone (2013) elaborates that historical trauma more completely describes the cumulative, intergenerational impact of colonization upon Indigenous Peoples, while PTSD is a disorder specific to an individual person. Gone (2013) surmises that Indigenous community members have collectively and intergenerationally experienced subjugation and oppression including but not limited to religious suppression, coercive assimilation, conquest, genocide, disease, theft of resources, captivity, forced relocation, and family disruption. As such, when the context of historical trauma is considered in relation to the current landscape of health and mental health within Indigenous North America, it is clear that the negative impacts of colonialism continue to cause immensely harmful conditions which threaten the lives and livelihood of Indigenous Peoples.

In fact, American Indians and Alaskan Natives have a lower life expectancy than that of the U.S. general population (Indian Health Service, 2019). As such, despite overtly genocidal practices coming to an end, Indigenous Peoples continue to be subjected to ongoing discrimination and the impact of historical trauma, which significantly impacts health and well-being. Economic and social deprivation caused by colonialism and colonial thought also contribute deleteriously to health disparities. These negative influences on health and well-being ultimately continue to contribute to higher than average mortality rates. As such, it appears that Indigenous Peoples across North America continue to face immense physical and mental health disparities which may lead to death and higher mortality than that of the general population.

In addition to insidious physical and mental health disparities, Indigenous Peoples, in particular Indigenous Women, continue to face an onslaught of sudden disappearances and death which undoubtedly will contribute to the ongoing impact of collective group trauma. The phenomenon of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), is a testament that the lives of Indigenous Peoples continue to be devalued, pilfered, and threatened. It is commonly known that Indigenous women and girls frequently go missing, largely due to sex trafficking, sexual assault, and violence. Yet despite this, there are few academic investigations about the impact this has on Indigenous communities, families, and the few individuals who manage to survive these attacks and offenses. In particular, efforts to raise awareness for this phenomenon are rarely discussed in psychological literature. While there are some who are taking action to raise awareness for this topic within academic and public realms, this phenomenon remains a largely understudied testament that the lives and welfare of Indigenous women are undervalued and at risk.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (2014) completed a Report on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women, and expressed that the overall number of missing and murdered Indigenous women extends beyond public perception. More specifically, the RCMP (2014) suggest that there is an overrepresentation of Aboriginal women amongst the total numbers of missing and murdered women in Canada overall. The Urban Indian Health Institute (2018) also collected data from 71 urban cities in the United States to report information related to the phenomenon of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Girls and Women. The Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) (2018) explained that cases were distributed across the lifespan with some victims being less than a year old, all the way to impacting elders well into their 80's. The UIHI (2018) also described that some of the victims were found to be pregnant at the time of their

death. Furthermore, the UIHI (2018) suggested that some victims were left nude after being murdered, and their bodies demonstrated signs of sexual assault. The UIHI (2018) suggests that deaths may be linked to sexual assault, domestic violence, police brutality, and sex trade safety concerns. The UIHI (2018) reports that victims seemed to have diverse relationships with perpetrators, as some were killed by partners, family members, drug dealers, and serial killers. Moreover, the UIHI (2018) suggests that many perpetrators are not held accountable or found to be guilty. The UIHI (2018) also noted that approximately half of perpetrators were Non-Native, and approximately 83% were male-identified.

Given the onslaught of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, it is imperative the general public learn more about this phenomenon to raise awareness for these concerns which most certainly contribute to ongoing historical trauma. While a paucity of academic literature exists on this topic, an article by Peternelj-Taylor, C. (2014) has brought attention to the REDress Project created by artist Jamie Black, in Canada, who installed a collection of red dresses hanging from trees to represent the Indigenous women who are missing and murdered. Peternelj-Taylor (2014) makes the ardent point that a challenge within this domain is continuing the conversation about these events, and how to help others to understand who do surely not experience this same degree of oppressive marginalization, racism, and stigma. There are also a number of grass-roots projects, artists, and activists bringing attention to these concerns, such as the group Walking With Our Sisters (2020), who has collected and exhibited moccasin vamps to represent each person who is missing and murdered. An art installment created by artist Cannupa Hanska Luger (2019) portraying over 4000 clay beads also represents the loss of Indigenous women, girls, and those who identify as transgender and queer.

While there are a number of other efforts to raise awareness for the MMIW phenomenon, more needs to be done to address and remediate these concerns.

The UIHI (2018) suggests that media sources implement the use of language which conveys victim blaming, and which ultimately perpetuates negative perceptions and stereotypes about Indigenous Women. Monchalin et al., (2019), also suggest that people may inaccurately view the violence Indigenous Peoples experience to be a result of their personal failures or societal oversights which are accidental in nature, opposed to understanding that the inherent connectedness of these concerns is related to the structure of colonialism. Furthermore, Monchalin, et al. support that the phenomenon of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women is inherently embedded within the structure of colonialism and patriarchy, which supplies a framework for comprehending the violence that is enacted towards Indigenous Peoples. As such, it is clear that Indigenous Peoples, particularly Women, Girls, Transgender, and Queer identified People, are recurrently victimized within society at alarming rates, often with little political or social recourse for perpetrators. Ultimately, this phenomenon lends credence to the point that Indigenous Peoples continue to experience racial discrimination, dehumanization, and life-threatening violence, let alone lesser forms of discrimination and bias.

According to Senter and Ling (2017), microaggressions towards Indigenous Peoples also represent the remnants of conventional hostile and derogatory attitudes towards Indigenous Peoples that have always been present. As such, it appears that traditional racism has not disappeared, but instead has merely changed form with modernization, and has become more subtle and multifaceted in nature (Senter & Ling, 2017). The intricacies of modern-day racism therefore collude sub-textually to reinforce a racial hierarchy where White People remain in power, and Indigenous Peoples remain at an eternal lower and reprehensible social status (Senter

& Ling, 2017). When Indigenous People challenge the status quo, microaggressions can be utilized by those in power as a veiled means to subjugate these contests, thus maintaining racial supremacy and governance (Senter & Ling, 2017). Duran et al. (2008) indicate that when people are oppressed, they are wounded; as such, the continual use of microaggressions perpetuates oppression, thereby mitigating imperative healing processes necessary to rectify the soul wound that has been incurred upon Indigenous Peoples.

Despite White People enacting these historical atrocities and their subsequent harms, it appears that responsibility and remediation has not occurred. In fact, a discourse of silencing physical, cultural, and mental genocide globally within South America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and North America has instead taken place (Fenelon & Trafzer, 2014). Graham (2002, p. 58) likewise suggests that the historical trauma enacted against Indigenous Peoples by White People is a history that is "…painful to recall and more painful when it seems to be forgotten, trivialized, or denied." White People have effectively created a horrific historic timeline for Indigenous Peoples, and then actively suppressed its importance on their current state of well-being by continuing to engage in microinvalidations to this day that perpetually minimize their cultural reality.

While government organizations and institutions have attempted over the years to make amends to Indigenous Peoples in various ways, the implementation of these reformations have proved to be of a partisan nature. For instance, Senter & Ling (2017) contend that The Indian Reorganization Act of 1935 actually contributed to fostering dependency on the government by requiring tribes to choose tribal council members and also adopt a constitution in order to be recognized. As such, when a move towards increased freedom and self-determination does take place, it still appears horribly misguided. Widespread attempts by governments to disperse

monetary resources amongst tribes and tribal members have also been publicized, yet these efforts have provided little in recompense for generations of historical trauma and land dispossession. The parochial nature of these acts of restitution represent movement in a positive direction, but ultimately it is clear that more needs to be done to remediate concerns.

Tuck and Yang (2012) suggest that reparations are meant to redress wrongdoings against non-White Peoples to alleviate the pervasive impact of colonialism which has contributed to poverty, cultural genocide, premature death, dispossession, and more. The monetary funds and supposed freedoms which have been dispensed to Indigenous Peoples represent relatively small steps towards the recompense of the devastation of an entire continental civilization. Tuck and Yang elucidate that immense efforts at decolonization and reformation would need to take place to even begin to approximate an attempt to be compensatory towards Indigenous Peoples. Tuck and Yang's (2012) sentiments may best be summated with the following two quotes; "…the ideal of "redistribution of wealth" camouflages how much of the wealth is *land*, Native land" (p.23), noting emphatically; "Urban land (indeed all land) is Native Land" (p.23).

In summation, it is clear to see how cultural and spiritual genocide has been incurred upon Indigenous Peoples of North America through forced land relocation, land repossession, boarding schools, and Church indoctrination. It is also very clear how the impacts of such harms continue to this day via widespread disparities in health, mental health, economic status, and community living standards. While some governmental efforts to engage in remediation and to pay reparations have been made, this task is likely an impossible yet infinitely important effort that requires more attention and resources than it is currently receiving. Furthermore, it is apparent that the continued discrimination of Indigenous Peoples continues to take place, and long-lasting effects of historical trauma are quite palpable.

Ongoing Discrimination and Dehumanization

"How smooth must be the language of the white, when they can make right look wrong, and wrong look right." These words spoken by Black Hawk (Sauk) [Brown, 2020], describe the inherent power that words can carry, thus distorting the truth and confuscating social arrangements to promulgate victim blaming. This sort of rhetoric paints a picture rife with denial of injustice, and with a rejection of responsibility at its core suggesting White People have done, and can do, no harm. Not only does this rhetoric wrongly absolve White People from the wrongs that have been committed, but it also obsequiously places them in a position of feigned moral superiority. This subsection is thus dedicated to delineating how racial, cultural, and spiritual discrimination continue to this day, often in the form of everyday language use and covert subtleties in action; these forms of discrimination ultimately continue to be largely unacknowledged, discounted, and ignored, let alone confessed and conceded.

Society in North America largely claims to have substantially mitigated discriminatory attitudes based on ethnicity, but nevertheless, the dominant culture continues to hold explicit and implicit negative attitudes about Indigenous Peoples (Hill et al., 2010). Indigenous Peoples continue to be invalidated by the subtle and overt denigration of their cultural worldview, customs, values, language, spirituality, and overall lifestyle (Hill et al., 2010; Sue, 2010b). Moreover, modern-day discrimination exacerbates the soul wound caused by historical trauma, and is continually enacted against Indigenous Peoples via ongoing legal land claim disputes surrounding sacred religious/spiritual sites, culturally invalidating rhetoric, and unending cultural losses (LaDuke, 2005; Hill et al., 2010).

In fact, ethnoviolence appears to run rampant in society despite the incidence of overt racism purportedly decreasing in contemporary Western society. It is exceedingly obvious that Indigenous Peoples continue to experience discrimination based on their ethnic group

membership. Explicating the foundation of myths, stereotypes, mascots, and ethnoviolence aimed toward Indigenous Peoples may well help to elucidate how the current state of modern discrimination has transformed from overt forms of racial prejudice including genocide, to more insidious and implicit forms of bias. Largely, ethnic minority groups are described as being stigmatized by outgroup members who feel threatened by their cultural practices and origins (Helms et al., 2012). Indigenous Peoples, amongst other People of Color in North America, were well known to be forcefully assimilated into Euro-American and Euro-Canadian culture, which was founded in xenophobic colonialism. It is therefore logically apparent that Indigenous Peoples, amongst other People of Color who resisted cultural assimilation, would then be subjected to ongoing discrimination and violence based solely upon ethnic group membership.

Helms et al. (2012) define and describe ethnoviolence as "violence and intimidation directed at members of ethnic groups that have been marginalized and stigmatized by the dominant or host culture because their inability or unwillingness to assimilate threatens the dominant group's entitlement to society or community resources" (p.54). According to these authors, ethnoviolence is aimed towards the people themselves who are viewed as "symbols of undesirable cultural practices" (Helms et al., 2012, p.55). Helms et al. (2012) therefore suggest that cultural racism differs in nature from ethnoviolence, as cultural racism primarily focuses on observable discrimination of the products of a group, including embodiments of culture such as music or language.

Helms et al. (2012) suggest that target minority groups are likely to experience symptoms congruent with trauma due to events which are ethno-violent in nature. For instance, these authors explain that Jewish or Black individuals who witness Neo-Nazis or Ku Klux Klan members marching through predominantly Jewish or Black Communities would be likely to

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experience ethnoviolence as a result of these events, which may be accompanied by symptoms congruent with trauma (Helms et al., 2012). Given that People of Color are likely to be subjected to ethnoviolence, this line of thought and example, may prospectively be extended to consider the idea that Indigenous Peoples may have similar symptoms and reactions congruent with collectivized trauma. For instance, it could be reasonably hypothesized that Indigenous People may experience ethnoviolence when interacting with White People in power, in government occupations, in the Church, in educational spaces, and within Indigenous communities. Helms et al. suggest that it can be exceedingly difficult to accurately assess how ethnoviolence impacts mental health, but they do recommend that Native Americans, amongst other People of Color, who present with atypical trauma symptoms, or ambiguous causation for symptoms, should be provided with racially informed and culturally responsive assessment and interventions.

In addition to the experience of ethnoviolence, Indigenous Peoples continue to be subjected to widespread malicious and misconceived stereotypes that continue to plague modern conceptions of this group. Indigenous Peoples are brutally stereotyped, and have been noted to be viewed as savages and alcoholics, who are primitive, prone to superstition, uneducable, and uncivilized (Sue, 2003; Hill et al., 2010; Sue, 2010b). Moreover, Indigenous People are viewed as being primarily nonverbal, animalistic, blood-thirsty, subhuman, passive, noncompetitive, drunkards (Sue, 2010b; Senter & Ling, 2017). Sue (2010b) explains how these sorts of images effectively teach children to fear and avoid Indigenous Peoples, and other POC who have their own negative images presented. As such, people learn that these groups should thus evoke emotional reactions of fear, disgust, revulsion, and contamination (Sue, 2010b).

The mass media including radio, television, film, magazines, newspapers, and websites, also contribute to the dispensation of racial images and beliefs (Sue, 2010b). In particular, the

media negatively contributes to ongoing stereotypical and unidimensional characterizations of Indigenous Peoples who are commonly depicted as "savages" (Hill et al., 2010). In fact, Indigenous Peoples are primarily portrayed in media as representing one of three stereotypical images; the generic Indian, the good/bad Indian, or the Indian as the "other" (Berkhofer, 1978, as cited in Hill et al., 2010, p. 112). When Indigenous Peoples are depicted as a generic Indigenous other, this encourages the idea that Indigenous tribes are homogenous, and neglects the differences amongst values, cultures, physical features, and traditions amongst tribes and individuals (Hill et al., 2010). Meanwhile, the Indian as the "other" (p.112) represents the notion that Indigenous Peoples are in opposition to White culture, which places them in a position of contrast, and contributes to their dehumanization (Hill et al., 2010). Next, the good/bad Indian image is one where Indigenous Peoples are viewed as a good noble savage, who is friendly and subservient, or alternatively, a bad Indigenous Person who engages in alcohol use, societally transgresses, and who is otherwise apt to be degraded (Berkhofer, 1978, as cited in, Hill et al., 2010, p. 112). According to Hill et al. (2010), this sort of labeling represents a microaggression and effectively dehumanizes Indigenous Peoples both implicitly and explicitly. This *othering* process may convey the notion that Indigenous Peoples are somehow lesser than the dominant White culture, and therefore represent an inferior status in society (Hill et al., 2010). This ill-conceived sense of racialized "*otherness"* continually invites contrasting comparisons to take place, thus demarcating an in-group and out-group, whereby minority groups exist outside of the dominant group, as opposed to being viewed as a fundamental part of society (Smith, 1999, as cited in Hill et al., 2010, p. 112).

Burkley et al. (2017) similarly found that Indigenous stereotypes can be effectively separated into subgroups based on clusters delineating the intersections of high to low warmth,

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and high to low competence. Those who are perceived to be both of high warmth and high competence were perceived to be worthy of admiration, while those of low competence and warmth seemed to elicit contempt (Burkley et al., 2017). Burkley et al. demonstrated that most subgroups were perceived to be low in warmth and competence, and were stereotypically viewed as being lazy, uneducated, poor, alcoholic, drug addicted, and savage. Even those who were viewed as slightly more competent and interpersonally warm, were viewed as being warriors and casino owners, who are Red-Skinned, and traditional (Burkley et al., 2017).

As such, it is easy to see how immensely damaging the images of Indigenous People in media are. According to Graham (2002), when Indigenous youth view media and accept racial stereotypes based on media depictions, they may endure internalized oppression, wherein they blame themselves for problems that have resulted from oppression and racism. Graham (2002) therefore indicates that positive media representations are needed in society. Hill et al. (2010) elaborate that Indigenous Peoples have been largely romanticized and effectively viewed as relics of history, therefore existing within the Colonial era; and as such, are not equated with modern-day people. Consequently, it is possible that Indigenous People who view these stereotypes could conceivably feel as though they are not wanted in society, and do not have a place in the modern world. In fact, it is commonly known amongst Indigenous Peoples that members of the dominant society often have grand misperceptions about how contemporary Indigenous People live their lives day to day, including endorsing myths and misconceptions related to the so called 'privileges' they are afforded by the government.

In fact, Indigenous People have been noted in literature to be thought of as being afforded unearned benefits wherein they obtain casino revenue without taxation (Brayboy, 2013, as cited in Senter & Ling, 2017, p. 260). Moreover, while there are treaties and laws which have been put

in place with certain tribes as pledged compensation rights, White People may mistakenly view these as benefits, thus believing that Indigenous Peoples depend on the government for sustenance (Robertson, 2015; Senter & Ling, 2017). Clark et al. (2014) likewise explored Aboriginal student microaggressions in Canada, and discovered a common theme amongst Indigenous students, wherein their peers accused them of having unfair advantages due to receiving unearned benefits. As a result, students were noted to experience jealous accusations from others which ultimately stemmed from misguided racial stereotypes, such as suggesting that Indigenous students receive free education (Clark et al., 2014).

Longstanding distortions such as the myth of meritocracy also support current Indigenous stereotypes; this myth suggests that minority group members receive undeserved rewards based solely upon their racial or ethnic heritage for statistical equity reasons (Hill et al., 2010; Ancis, 1996). Again, this sentiment introduces the idea that Indigenous Peoples are receiving undeserved and unearned benefits as opposed to "hard-won" compensation (Clark et al., 2014, p. 7). The myth of meritocracy also influences and impacts people at an individual level, therefore, when an Indigenous person wins an award or is presented with honors, those in the dominant culture assume that the institution providing the award is collectively attempting to meet predetermined minority equity statistics to demonstrate affirmative action (Hill et al., 2010; Ancis et al., 1996). As such, the individual who has rightfully earned these accolades based on their unique talents, skills, work effort, and abilities is ultimately invalidated for their efforts (Ancis et al., 1996; Hill et al., 2010). Even within educational institutions themselves, overt linguistic terms and concepts are used to disguise the harms enacted onto Peoples of Color (Sue, 2010b). For instance, Sue (2010b) describes how taking land from Native Americans was labelled educationally as "manifest destiny" (p.118) to reflect White racial superiority while

disguising the harms enacted onto Indigenous Peoples. As such, educational systems may do very little to counter misinformation, and in fact may even promulgate it themselves. Hill et al. (2010) affirm that systemic inequalities require more exploration and critical evaluation within post-secondary settings.

Altogether, it is concerning that even those in higher education, or who are purported to be more knowledgeable than the general public, re-enact stereotypes and endorse myths which are clearly an indication of White racial superiority and Indigenous inferiority. Helms et al. (2012) suggest in particular, that People of Color may be revictimized when others around them, such as mental health professionals and researchers, do not believe them, or view them as hypersensitive, arrogant, opportunistic, or otherwise engage with them based on these racial stereotypes. Unfortunately, the public also continues to endorse the use of stereotypical and racist imagery to the extent that it is commonplace in society.

The endorsement of Indigenous stereotypes also provides a foundation for other forms of modern racism and discrimination, including the continued use of racialized mascots and pervasive racial microaggressions that are enacted in a variety of settings, including academic and professional domains. These racialized mascots continue to be endorsed by a great number of public people and organizations, despite the fact that associating Indigenous People with racialized athletics mascots can ultimately be harmful (Fryberg et al., 2008). In particular, viewing a White student wearing Indigenous mascot regalia creates an environment that is hostile in nature, and promotes inaccurate images of Indigenous People (Sue, 2010b). Furthermore, these sorts of images ultimately act as a barrier to creating a positive learning community (Sue, 2010b).

According to Chaney et al. (2011) some people purport that Indigenous mascots are somehow meant to be symbols of honor, thereby consciously justifying them with non-racist sentiments. Indigenous mascots are well known to be erroneously viewed by the dominant society to be representative of a cultural honor celebrating Indigenous Peoples as so-called worthy opponents to European settlers (LaDuke, 2005). Sue (2010b) also comments that people promulgate these Indigenous mascots under the misinformed guise that this is meant to "honor Native Americans" (p. 26), despite Indigenous Peoples aptly asking; "Why don't we feel honored?" (p. 26).

Freng and Willis-Esqueda (2011) explain that one would expect to see positive stereotypes primed by the use of Indigenous Mascots if they are indeed a symbol of honor, yet their research suggests that this positive priming did not occur, and instead, negative stereotype priming was extant. Chaney et al. (2011) also demonstrated that Indigenous mascots were implicitly viewed as being less positive than White mascots. Chaney et al. (2011) additionally found a strong negative bias towards both Indigenous People and Indigenous mascots, therefore suggesting that an Indigenous mascot does not depict an honorable representation of an Indigenous Person.

For instance, Fenelon (2016) explicitly comments on how apparently racist Indigenous mascots are, such as Chief Wahoo of the Cleveland Indians, and the Washington Redskins, yet these images continue to be used quite publicly. Freng and Willis-Esqueda (2011) investigated how Non-Indigenous Peoples reacted to Indigenous mascot imagery, such as Chief Wahoo, who is noted to be one of the most offensive Indigenous mascots, and found that this image did indeed trigger negative stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, Freng and Willis-Esqueda (2011) demonstrated that the use of such a mascot does in fact activate the idea of in-

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groups (Non-Indigenous Peoples) and outgroups (Indigenous Peoples). As such, this information appears to lend credence to the idea that these mascots serve to further disenfranchise Indigenous Peoples from the mainstream predominantly White public.

Fenelon (2016) correspondingly suggests that White-blindness contributes to the use of these Indigenous mascots which act as caricatures of Indigenous People as "savages" (p. 240). This image of a savage is particularly concerning given that Chaney et al.'s (2011) research demonstrated that Non-Indigenous People do not differentiate Indigenous mascots from Indigenous Peoples themselves; as such, Indigenous Peoples are perceived as interchangeable to Indigenous mascots, and are viewed in a negative connotation. To elaborate, an exploration of the implicit attitudes of Non-Indigenous Peoples by Chaney et al. (2011) demonstrated that Non-Indigenous Peoples appeared to have stereotypical expectations of, and attitudes towards, Indigenous People, which were associated with negative mascot bias. As such, there is an automatic association which exists amongst Indigenous mascots and Indigenous Peoples which can impact how Indigenous Peoples are viewed (Chaney et al., 2011).

Fryberg et al. (2008) explain that these mascots are harmful, as they act as a reminder of how Indigenous Peoples are viewed by the dominant society, and can therefore be limiting to the self-perception of Indigenous Peoples. Helms et al. (2012) note that the mental health needs of targets are often disregarded in favor of supporting the social-political rights of perpetrators; they provide the example of freedom of speech as being one of these rights which is legitimized regardless of the impact this may have on minority group members. As such, Indigenous mascots are likely to continue to be used despite the repugnant and objectionable nature of them which contributes to negative perceptions of Indigenous Peoples. According to Sue (2010b) this occurrence demonstrates how White People and People of Color experience reality in very

different ways, and also exculpates the idea that environmental microaggressions are yet another form of ongoing racial discrimination. Despite the fact that many Indigenous Peoples are speaking out against such mascots, they remain visible in society today as a reminder that White men in power continue to commercialize and profit from a culture that is most assuredly not theirs (LaDuke, 2005).

Overall, the rights and desires of White-Dominant society continue to be exercised at the expense of the well-being and mental health of People of Color. As such, the perpetuation of White Supremacy is enacted recurrently in society by use of these stereotypes, myths, and mascots. The image of an Indigenous Person therefore does not truly belong to Indigenous People, but instead is used to the advantage of White People in power, and to the disadvantage of those who's rights to welfare are clearly not valued. This idea is supported by Berkhofer (1978, as cited in Chaney et al., 2011, p. 42) who suggests that despite the actual presence of Indigenous Peoples, the conceptualization of an Indian is a White image which calls to stereotypes.

There is a preponderance of evidence to suggest that Indigenous Peoples continue to experience a wide variety of fatuous and injurious myths, stereotypes, and misrepresentations. The people who enact these stereotypes appear to have little concern for the deleterious and damaging impact these misguided thoughts and sentiments can have on the individual and the collective identity of Indigenous Peoples throughout North America. The fact that these stereotypes continue to be commercialized, monetized, and supported in society speaks to the reality that racism has not dissipated from society as some unwittingly purport. Even well-intentioned and well-educated Non-Indigenous People are likely to hold implicit biases impacting how they perceive Indigenous Peoples, culture, and ways of being. The concept of microaggressions therefore helps to explain this phenomenon, and ultimately represents the idea

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that individuals may consciously or unconsciously express denigrating messages to People of Color based on their racial or ethnic minority group (Sue et al., 2007).

Given that Indigenous ethnoviolence, myths, and stereotypes are immediately apparent in society, it makes inherent sense that lesser forms of racism also exist within mainstream society that shape the way Indigenous Peoples are viewed and treated. Microaggressions represent a modern embodiment of the evolving form of racism and discrimination, and when enacted towards Indigenous Peoples, are likely to represent remnants of colonial thought in a way that is akin to stereotypes, myths, and present-day racist imagery. As such, the original xenophobic misperceptions of White Colonialists continue to be threaded amongst contemporary North American society. These misperceptions, negative connotations, and sentiments are carried forward intergenerationally, in an ever-evolving fashion, causing individuals in the dominant culture to explicitly and implicitly possess prejudiced thoughts and perceptions. Ignorant stereotypes clearly continue to be enacted within society, and it is apparent that Indigenous Peoples are subjected to invalidations aimed at their cultural values, spiritualities/religions, and ways of being in the world, therefore exposing them to microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations (Sue, 2010b). As such, microaggressions are worthy of further exploration to better understand the evolving nature of discrimination presently aimed towards Indigenous Peoples.

Conclusion

In an effort to mitigate the intergenerational harms historically enacted upon Indigenous Peoples by the dominant culture, it is imperative that action be taken to eradicate modern remnants of xenophobia. While racial, ethnic, and spiritual discrimination are no longer openly accepted by the vast majority of people in North American society, people continue to hold

implicit attitudes of superiority that manifest subtly within their speech, behaviors, action and inaction, and lack of cultural awareness. Racial and spiritual equality will continue to be an impossibility until the remnants of White racial and religious supremacy have been recognized within each person and internally uprooted with a compassionate commitment to the betterment of all.

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